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# THE CARIBBEAN

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# The Caribbean

*The Story of Our  
Sea of Destiny*

by

W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

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NEW YORK

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## MEDITERRANEAN OF THE WEST

### *An Introduction*

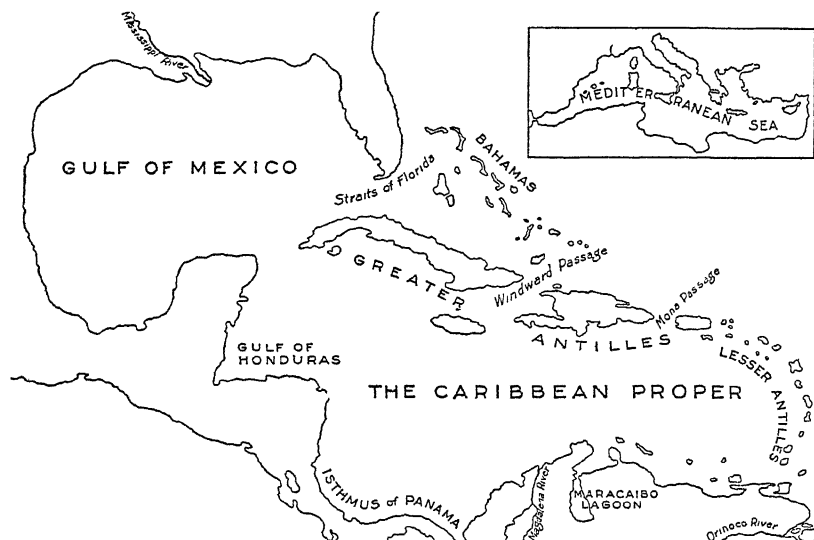
LANDLOCKED seas invariably have played a great role in history. They are as a magnet to the nations which spring up around their shores and strive to dominate them. At times, briefly, some empire has been able to boast of *Mare Nostrum*. But the pomp is humbled and the power dispersed by the centripetal force of rival ambitions which it is the destiny of the sea to evoke. Look at the map and observe that in every instance such waters are rimmed by a variegated political pattern. The reference is not to lakes, no matter how large, but to those inland oceans which can be entered through straits, and upon which the trade routes of half a world converge. The Mediterranean is the classic example. Another is the South China Sea. Between the Americas, a glittering lure since Columbus discovered it 448 years ago, lies our own Caribbean.

Held in the embrace of two continents, the Caribbean is the key to both. Moreover, it affords the only direct means of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This was true even before the digging of the Panama Canal. For the Isthmus is narrow, and it was the practice of old seafarers to transship here, accepting the overland haul of fifty miles as a lesser evil than sailing around Cape Horn. The canal already opened and the one planned across Nicaragua multiply the advantages of the course enormously. They also enhance imperial jealousies.

A sea derives its personality from two things: the lands surrounding it, their physical structure, their flora and fauna, the climatic conditions that result; the men who struggle for the lands and leave the record of their kaleidoscopic ownership. The atlases contain outline portraits from both points of view. The second is much the more hackneyed. Maps of the Caribbean which show a yellow Cuba, say, adjoining a green Haiti, a red Jamaica, are familiar enough, and although the average man does not know why there should be so many governments he retains a pictorial memory of the region in those terms. Only a few students look at charts which ignore political boundaries and feature the topography. Yet it is with these that one should begin.



## THE CARIBBEAN



The Caribbean Area

The Caribbean proper sweeps approximately 1,800 miles from the strait called the Serpent's Mouth, between South America and Trinidad, to the Yucatan Channel. The Gulf of Mexico, half as long, must be considered an extension of the Caribbean, making a total length of 2,700 miles with a width that varies between 400 and 700 miles. An arc of islands encloses it on the east and northeast. These are the Bahamas, the Greater and the Lesser Antilles. Though they narrow to a tenuous chain in the Lesser Antilles, they are, except for the Bahamas, relatively as mountainous as the mainland, and the sea is like a sentineled amphitheater until the Yucatan Channel is reached. Then an abrupt change occurs. The Yucatan and Florida peninsulas are flat as are the Bahama Islands in the Atlantic Ocean. The North American boundary is a vast plain into which the gulf bites, and mountains are visible only on the Mexican side.

Let us put it another way: The backbone of the two continents is the range called Andes in the south, Sierra Madre and Rockies in the north. It sinks to a low elevation at the Isthmus of Panama. A spur extends along the entire north coast of South America and links up with the shattered Antillean mountains. Thus a loop of peaks is thrown about the Caribbean proper, as far as Cuba. Beyond, except due west,

the barriers are coral cays, the pine-grown sands of Florida and the rich lowlands drained by the Mississippi.

No other river emptying into these waters compares in size with the Mississippi. The Magdalena, which taps Colombia, is one-third as long. The Orinoco runs from west to east through Venezuela and emerges below Trinidad, its lesser mouths creating those currents which so baffled Christopher Columbus, as he sailed between Trinidad and the continent. But the Caribbean mothers the most important of all submarine rivers, the Gulf Stream, which sends its heat north in a mighty torrent at four miles an hour to moderate the climate of Europe.

The color scheme of the Caribbean is the purplish blue of its deep waters, the cobalt of the sky, white clouds and white surf pounding on the shore line, an incredible opulence of green vegetation that clothes the mountains and charges down to the sea's edge, a spangling of flowers in which the predominant note is red. There are few neutral tints, and yellow is negligible in the chromatic scale.

Long stretches of swamp, choked with mangroves of a lurid, metallic green, merge into sandy areas overgrown by the deceptive sea grape. The cultivated lands visible from at large are primarily given over to level fields of sugar cane and to bananas, the latter of a deeper emerald than the cane. Wherever a clear beach exists, it is fringed with coconut palms leaning into the wind. A close inspection is needed to realize that breadfruit and certain other food-bearing trees impinge here and there upon the ubiquitous bananas and palms. Forests commence with the foothills, but these often rise sheer from the coast.

Coral atolls speck the eastern edge of the Antilles, particularly among the Bahamas. New land is coming into existence here. In places, such as the Gulf of Batabanó between Cuba and the Isle of Pines, and the Campeche Bank off Yucatan, the water is so shallow that the bottom can be seen for miles. Contrariwise, there are stupendous deeps in the Caribbean, notably the submarine abyss which drops away from the north coast of Puerto Rico 8,526 meters.

The seascapes are alive with birds. The most spectacular in flight is the man-of-war or frigate bird, with its long-pointed tail, its angular wings that give the impression of having been clipped out of metal, so rigidly are they held for sustained soaring and circling. Terns, noddies and bizarre pelicans abound. But the scarlet flamingo, at one time numerous, is confined now to remote cays. In the winter months, migratory ducks flock in the marshes, vying with a declining population of egrets and bitterns. Parrots are sometimes to be seen flashing from thicket to thicket of a wooded section. Black turkey buzzards patrol

inshore as scavengers, endlessly a-wing, crossing and recrossing their own tracks, skirting the beach yet never venturing out to sea.

These are the home waters of the giant green turtle, the manatee and several varieties of shark. They come to the surface sufficiently often to be noted by sharp eyes and to lend character to the scene. The innumerable, gaudy fishes remain invisible, except the little flying fish with its habit of propelling itself from the water and volplaning toward a far spot it appears to lack the power to reach. Nothing is more typical of the Caribbean than the constant emergence of these travelers, singly or in shoals, their iridescent flight-fins throwing off the sunlight in dots of color. Alligators dozing on sandbars at the mouths of rivers were once typical, too, but these calibans are rapidly sharing the extinction of the lovely flamingoes.

—The greater part of the region, roughly that which is girt by the mountains and which lies south of the Tropic of Cancer, is subject to violent earthquakes. Volcanic action has been considerable in the past and is still a peril. But save for Mont Pelée on Martinique and the related soufrières of near-by islands, the dangerous cones are well inland. Popocatepetl, the colossus, 17,876 feet, stands in south-central Mexico. The plumed virgins of Nicaragua are not visible from the sea.

You may pass a lifetime in the Caribbean and not experience a seismic disturbance, unless you have chosen a very bad spot. But no resident or frequent visitor can count on evading the hurricane, grandiose scourge and master phenomenon thereabouts. Even the name is native, being derived from the Carib god Huracán, whose frown makes livid the sky and whose lips pursed for blowing create the circular tempest.

The signs of what is about to happen are unmistakable. Small cirrus clouds appear, drifting high and fast. They are followed by nimbus clouds, dark and ragged. The tides rise, because far away the advancing storm is whipping the water before it. The first phase may take an hour or two. The world has grown preternaturally still—and then the wind and the rain come roaring.

Some fourteen hurricanes occur each season, between late June and early November, of which an average of three are serious. But they trace erratic courses. Any given spot is likely to escape for ten years. The storms originate in the doldrums on the Atlantic, a little north of the Equator, are caught up by the westerly trades and sent spinning through the Caribbean. Weakening as they leave the tropics, they may curve across the ocean or stab into North America. Their last gasps have been known to take place over Labrador, Greenland and Iceland.

Fortunately, the width of a hurricane's path is seldom more than

thirty miles, and often is much less. The devastation wrought by the wind traveling at from seventy-five to two hundred miles an hour is enhanced by rain of deluge proportions. But the common aftermath of earthquakes, fire in the wreckage, is prevented by the downfall of water which attends a hurricane, and in the long run vegetation receives such benefits from the prodigious rain that these are said to outweigh the losses caused by the wind.

The Caribbean is not exactly a mild sea, even when no hurricane is raging. It generates brusque little storms at most times of the year, and on certain lee shores the ground swell is extraordinary. On the other hand, nowhere else can all the elements join to produce such balmy and absolute tranquillity. The Windward Passage, between Cuba and Haiti, has a bad reputation, but again and again the writer has seen its waters without a ripple under a sky where the cumulus clouds seemed motionless. A little breeze stirred delicately; it did not blow. It was of body temperature, and it brushed along one's skin like a flicker of diaphanous silk.

The islands have some magnificent harbors, notably Havana and Santiago, Cuba; Kingston, Jamaica; the Mole St. Nicholas and Samaná Bay, Hispaniola; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Castries, St. Lucia. Make-shift ports are more numerous, and this is especially true of the mainland, from the open roadstead of La Guayra, Venezuela, which is at the foot of precipitous mountains, to the poor anchorages of Colon and Vera Cruz, or New Orleans ninety miles beyond the mud flats of the Mississippi delta. Maracaibo lagoon, miscalled a lake, could float the navies of the world, but they have passed it by. There are ghost havens, too: deserted Porto Bello and Nombre de Dios in Panama, the original site of Havana on the south coast of Cuba and the buccaneers' Tortuga.

Only a few cities lie in full view as one looks for them from the deck of a ship. The monumental design and candor of the Mediterranean world are absent. Caribbean towns were apt to be built in sheltered localities where they could not be bombarded from the sea, at the far end of bottle-neck harbors like Santiago-de-Cuba or Cartagena, up the estuaries of rivers like old Santo Domingo. The buildings may be so swamped by trees, as at Kingston, that the newcomer scarcely realizes he is approaching a capital. Havana is an exception, chiefly because it is a great city that has expanded from its inner waterfront to the ocean, where its superb *malecón* or paved levee runs for miles alongside the blue.

Around the beautiful sea, the salient works of man are the mouldering fortresses built by early conquerors and the lighthouses erected by

moderns. Canvas has gone from the face of it, and we meet instead the luxury liners carrying cruise passengers in winter, the fleets of white fruiters, cargo tramps from every maritime country and—least attractive—the tankers which come for the oil of Texas, Mexico and Venezuela. The airplane, supreme mechanical invention, the one which has added to the romance of travel in place of destroying it, flies regular and fast-expanding routes throughout the region.

All of the Caribbean proper and nearly half the Gulf of Mexico lie within the tropics, for Cancer bisects the ninety-mile strait between Cuba and Florida. The most southerly point, where the Gulf of Darien penetrates Colombia, is just eight degrees from the Equator. New Orleans at the other end is thirty degrees north, well inside the frost line and occasionally touched by snow.

Such is the geographical portrait. But the map conveys to me an impression of another sort, an imaginative parallel with the Mediterranean which may well have more significance than first appears. The two seas, about of a size, are similarly placed between the continents of the eastern and western hemispheres, respectively. A little poetical license and they can be rated as counterparts, while the imperial implications take on a startling resemblance.

It is necessary to match one world against the other. So let the hemisphere with the older civilization be the model. Allowances must be made for a distortion of the Americas, such as might have been caused by a titantic prehistoric cataclysm. A fairly complete and convincing comparison can then be achieved.

America north of the Isthmus of Panama becomes an aggregate of Europe and the islands of the Mediterranean. Asia has vanished in the Atlantic, as if sunk in the ocean precisely where the mythical lost continent of Atlantis is supposed to be. South America is the equivalent of Africa, and it will be noted that here the similarity is very great. These continents lie due north and south, are both crossed by the Equator and are shaped much alike. The northern littoral of South America, the true Spanish Main, turns into the Barbary Coast; the eastern section of Venezuela and the three Guianas into Egypt, with the Orinoco as the Nile.

A more vivid fancy is required to see the remaining lands as duplicates of the European galaxy. Tilt the map down slightly from right to left—remember that Asia has been eliminated—and it will be easier. The Lesser Antilles begin at Trinidad, which is Cyprus, while the smaller islands are the Cyclades and Sporades. Puerto Rico is Crete, and Hispaniola a Greece torn from the mainland. Cuba and the penin-

sula of Florida become Italy broken in two. Jamaica to the south is Sicily. The multitudinous Cuban cays and the Isle of Pines are Sardinia and Corsica smashed to fragments. The Bahamas are the islands of the Dalmatian coast.

The southern belt of the United States, centering at New Orleans, is France. Mexico is Spain, and Central America is Portugal. The rest of Europe has been catapulted into the northern half of the continent. It is a piquant coincidence that exactly where the British Isles should be in the jig-saw puzzle, we find New England and Nova Scotia. Interior Canada is the new Russia.

The parallel undergoes a complete reversal in one respect. The Isthmus of Panama is where the Straits of Gibraltar ought to be, and the eastern side of the sea is open. Yet that, too, is within the logic of the conception. We are apt to think of the map in the terms of Mercator's Projection. Refer to a globe, and it will be clear that the barrier of Panama fulfilled the same purpose for the Caribbean that Suez did for the Mediterranean. It closed the way to the Orient. The canals that have since been dug actually complement each other.

After they realized that America was a new world and not the Indies, the discoverers shaped their course by the dream, or the theory—whichever one prefers—that the glories of their old hemisphere would be repeated here. It worked out amazingly in some respects. South America, to the Conquistadores, was the Dark Continent, where they sought Ophir, found the treasure of the Incas and pursued the mirage of El Dorado. Mexico became New Spain in more than name.

Above all, the conflict for power has surged about the potent womb, our sea of destiny, the Mediterranean of the West.



## Part One

### WONDER AND TRIUMPH

*And the nightingale was singing and other birds of a thousand kinds in the month of November, there where I went. There are six or eight kinds of palms, which are a wonder to behold on account of their beautiful variety. . . . In the interior are mines of metal, and the population is without number. Española is a marvel.*

—CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

### CHAPTER ONE

#### THE COMING OF COLUMBUS

EARLY on the morning of October 12, 1492, some Arawâk Indians of the tribe called Lucayos came out of their huts on one of the Bahama Islands, young men and girls naked together. Their bodies were daubed irregularly with paint, mostly black and red, and the lads carried flimsy reed spears tipped with the teeth of sharks. They found the weather good for fishing and sauntered toward the shore. Then their idyllic way of life collapsed, had they but known it.

Three craft that must have seemed gigantic to them were floating close by, the prows pointing landward. Indeed, they could scarcely have recognized them as being ships, so different were they, with their high poops, masts and lateen sails, from the canoes of the islanders. They were apparitions from another world, fabulous palaces that rocked on the waves—the most momentous spectacle that western eyes had ever looked upon.

The Lucayos stared at the flotilla of Christopher Columbus, the *Santa María*, the *Pinta* and the *Niña*. They were not afraid, but were bemused with wonder. The women slipped back into the huts, where they crouched among the old people, overawed, fearing that the events about to occur were magical. Only the youths lingered in the coarse scrub on a hillock behind the beach, and peered down between the boles of the coconut palms.



The island was named in their language Guanahaní, but just where it was located is not known to this day. Tradition accepts San Salvador, otherwise Watling Island, on the eastern edge of the archipelago as having been the spot. Its inhabitants left no record of their geographical setting, but considering the manifest inaccuracy of the scene pictured by Columbus, we have as much right to present it through their eyes as through his.

Eager to impress his royal patrons, the Discoverer wrote:

"I had under my eyes an immense mountainous rock which completely surrounds that island. It forms a hollow and a port capable of holding all the fleets of Europe, but the entrance is very narrow. . . . There are gardens there, the most beautiful I have ever seen in my life, and sweet water in profusion."

He found such harbors in the Greater Antilles, and in describing them he used similar language. Nowhere throughout the low-lying, sterile Bahamas is there a spot remotely suggestive of steep bluffs and tropical luxuriance. Yet we know from the course he followed, the nautical entries in his journal, that he must have made his first landfall in the group and probably on its eastern edge. The location of San Salvador is about right. There is no running water there and consequently gardens could never have existed. A cliff does attain the height of 240 feet, greater than that of any neighboring islet, but it is not an encircling reef. Columbus dreamed, or he exaggerated.

The Lucayos saw boats lowered, of a size and style within the scope of their experience. The largest went from one to the other of the great vessels, and creatures resembling men, but infinitely more imposing, got into it and started to row toward the shore. As it approached, the natives were astounded to note that the faces of the occupants were thickly bearded and their bodies covered with garments that varied from steel breastplates to cloth and leather jerkins. Some wore helmets. The leader had a cloak and tunic that came to the knees, a flat velvet cap. All of them carried extraordinary weapons.

As they landed on the beach, the visitors raised three flags, one the national banner of Spain with the lion and the castle. The other two flags were identical, with a green cross in the center, the letter F on the left side and the letter Y on the right, each with a crown above it. The standards of Ferdinand and Isabella had reached America.

The Spaniards sank to their knees, turned their eyes upward and clasped their hands in front of them. Hoarse, solemn chanted sounds came from their moving lips. Even the Lucayos, who practiced no for-

mal worship, could tell that they were praying. By means of ingenuous signs, they afterward made it clear to the Spaniards that they believed them to have just arrived from Heaven and therefore to be gods, or at the least companions of the Sky God.

The young men on the hillock had been joined by others from the huts, including one young girl. They perceived that the Spaniards had finished their ceremonies and were looking about them, obviously seeking to locate the inhabitants. So they decided to go down to the beach. This they did timidly, for they were much afraid of the swords, the tall lances and the utterly incomprehensible crossbows.

But the first meeting between the invaders and their future victims was conducted with amity and inquisitiveness on both sides. They grinned at one another, struggled hopelessly with strange tongues and fell back on gestures. The newcomers produced red caps and glass beads, with which the Lucayos were delighted and eagerly decked their persons. Hawks' bells, the little enclosed tinklers which are attached to the bird's foot in the sport of falconry, pleased them still more.

Running back to their village to fetch gifts in exchange, the savages brought cotton thread in balls, parrots, even their household utensils and spare weapons, which they pressed upon the Spaniards. Finding that some of the boats had already left shore, they plunged into the ocean and swam after them, to make sure that no visitor failed to receive a present.

The one prophetic note was struck when they tried to examine the Spanish swords, took the latter by the blades through ignorance and cut their hands. Mournfully they pointed to old wounds on their bodies, made by arrows not swords, and indicated that they had been received in battle with enemies from other islands who had sought to capture them. The existence of the marauding Caribs thus impinged vaguely on history, as Columbus ended that fateful landing on October 12 and returned to his ships.

The story of the Genoese adventurer, with the delusions and the obscure motives that spurred him to this voyage, has been told so often that it appears impossible to add anything to it. The Vikings sailed to the cold northern regions of the New World almost five hundred years ahead of him, but lost the contact, and there is nothing to prove that he had the least inkling of what they had done. He may have heard legends of other travelers who had found land westward. Many such were current, unsupported by documentary evidence.

It is incontestable, however, that Columbus was the discoverer of the Caribbean Sea and all that middle American region which concerns us

here. He believed the world to be a globe, as did the majority of learned men in Europe in the Fifteenth Century. The practicability of reaching Asia by the new route was accepted generally, with the reservation that there might be unknown and insurmountable perils on the way. But the calculations of Columbus were warped by two theories, one natural enough, the other wildly absurd.

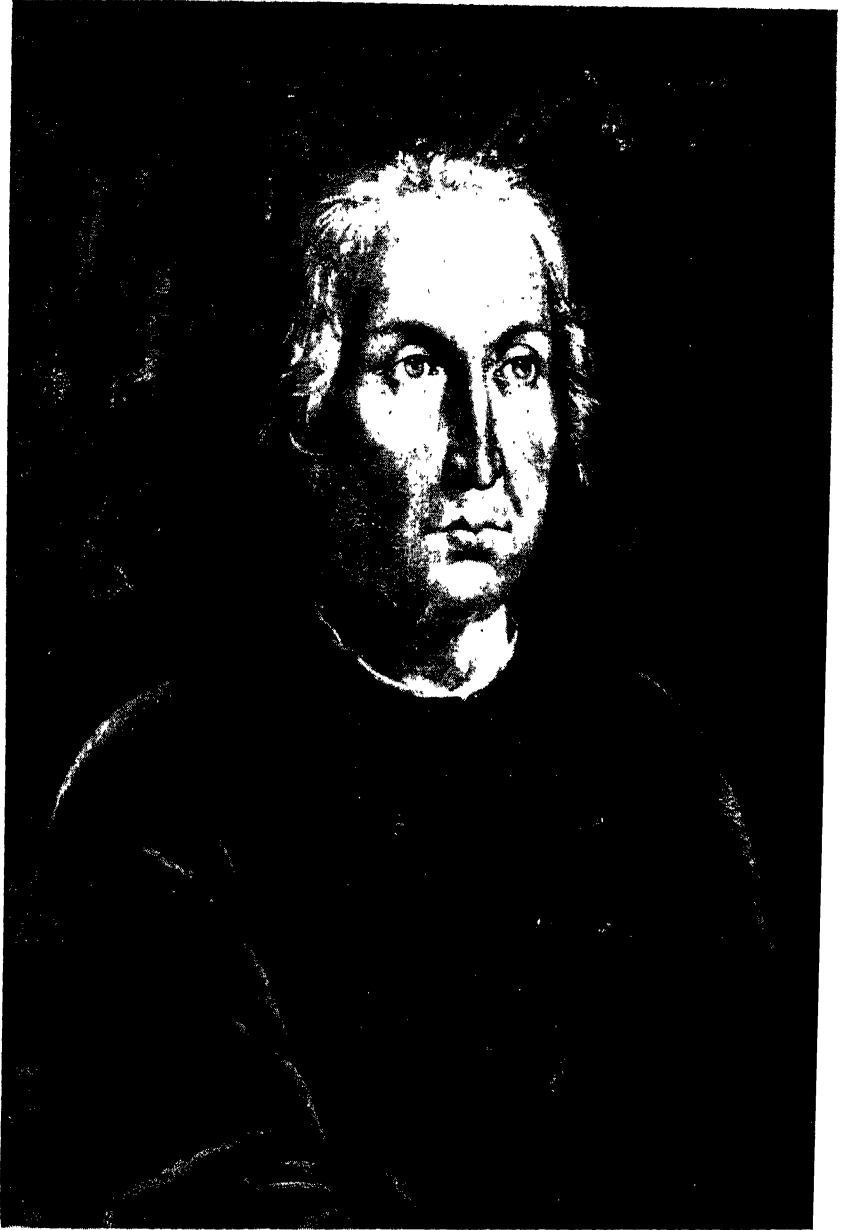
On the strength of Holy Scripture, as well as certain scientific authorities not the best opinion of his times, he supposed the world to be far smaller than it is, divided roughly into six parts of land and one of water. The Atlantic was the only large ocean. He conceived of Asia as being at the location occupied by the Americas, if not closer. The Antarctic Ocean was beyond his ken, much more the Pacific.

His second theory concerned the nature of the sphere. He thought that it was not a true globe, but shaped something "like a pear, of which one part is round, but the other, where the stalk comes, is elongated," or like "a very round ball, on one part of which there is a protuberance like a woman's nipple." The wording is his own. The peculiar merit of this formation was that the bulge approached closer to Heaven than the rest. It was, indeed, the earthly paradise, the kingdom of God on earth described in the Bible. No one could reach it save by the special permission of God.

Christopher Columbus, son of a poor weaver, was a religious fanatic who had absorbed his faith by oral teaching and as a result of the attitude of his age. He received no formal education. Cecil Jane, the most noted modern authority on his life, thinks that he was illiterate when he left Italy at about the age of thirty, and that his ability to read and write may still have been negligible when he reached the New World. His first journal of the discovery and his first letter from America to Ferdinand and Isabella seem to have been transcribed by a secretary. His Latin was defective, his Spanish uncultured, and he certainly was unable to write in his native Italian.

His only known signature, repeated in many documents, is a cipher which has never been interpreted. He studiously refrained from mentioning his own name or that of his wife on paper. As a mystifier concerning his early years, he has had few equals in history. He was a merchant and not the navigator that he claimed to be, perhaps had had no experience as a sailor. But he made it abundantly clear that he was a good businessman and that he was pious.

Every honest critic agrees that Columbus believed he had a divine mission to sail westward to Asia, and after that to open up certain unknown territories to the exaltation of the Catholic Church, the glory of



*Courtesy of the Pan-American Union*

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



his sovereigns and his personal profit. He confided in no one regarding the details. Yet his pseudo-scientific imaginings persuaded him that chance had been eliminated. The interior evidence of his records and his acts bears this out. He was not at all surprised when he found land at the latitude of the Bahamas. He deduced that these were the outlying islands of a continent. When he came to Cuba, he took it as a matter of course that it was Cipangu (Japan) and that Catayo (Cathay, or China) lay beyond. So he turned south. He was not interested in penetrating lands he supposed to be ruled by the Grand Khan. These could not be simply annexed, but would have to be conquered, a task beyond his resources.

He clung to his original project. He headed for the "stalk end of the pear," which marvelous, unexplored region lay south of Asia and west of Africa, according to his calculations. On each of his four voyages, he deliberately veered in that direction, without offering an explanation to his men. South America was really his goal, had he guessed it. There would have been more than a touch of the supernatural in his emotion if he, instead of Pizarro, could have found Peru—and found it on his first voyage. For there, precisely where his theory located it, in the towering Andes and thus "closer to heaven," he would have come upon the earthly paradise of the Inca realm. But it is useless to speculate whether or not its existence had been foreshadowed to him by travelers' tales.

He submitted a cautious and evasive summary of his idea to the court of Portugal, a country where he had some influence due to his having married into a good family, though Jane considers it possible that his wife was an illegitimate daughter. King João II refused to back him, and Columbus proceeded to Spain. There, after seven years of tortuous negotiations, he was commissioned on terms so favorable to him that one is almost forced to believe that he exercised a magnetic influence over Queen Isabella, his chief sponsor.

He was to be Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor-General of the territory added by him to the Spanish realm. In the event of success, both these positions were to be hereditary in his family, and he was to be raised to the nobility. He was to get a percentage of the profits from his discoveries. There can be no doubt that the venture, apart from its leader, was sanctioned because Spain had just completed the expulsion of the Moors and for the first time in her history was free to think of adventures overseas.

So Columbus went to Palos, to find men and ships. He found the three Pinzón brothers, who owned the *Santa María* and the *Niña*, who

were able to charter the caravel, *Pinta*, and to induce sailors to volunteer for the unprecedented voyage. Without their help, especially that of the oldest brother, Martin Alonso Pinzón, it is improbable that Columbus would have succeeded in equipping a flotilla, or even one boat, for he was treated with ridicule in the port. There is no exact record of the personnel of the crews. Eighty-seven men are known to have sailed, but in all likelihood additional anonymous recruits raised the total to above a hundred. Amazingly, the expedition left without a father confessor, a lack of which must have been keenly felt by the mystic-minded Columbus. Adventurers had agreed to follow him, but not one priest. As a result, the first Mass said in the New World was on the occasion of the second voyage.

On August 3, 1492, the ships sailed from Palos, and after seventy days, which included a call for repairs at the Canary Islands, they achieved the momentous landfall at Guanahani. The terrors experienced were those of ignorance. Romanticists have made much of the duel with danger, but in sober truth the trip across the Atlantic was uneventful.

We have had a glimpse at October 12, as the bewildered Lucayos knew it. To labor the point would be artificial, since the only documents are those left us by the Discoverer himself and Spanish historians. Fortunately, there is a wealth of memoirs by eyewitnesses concerning the four voyages.

The morning of the thirteenth large numbers of the savages came out to the ships. Forty-five men were counted in one of the long, swift canoes. They brought their products for barter. Columbus had never had experience with such unmercenary traders. He noted: "All that they do possess they give for anything which is given to them, so that they exchange things even for broken pieces of pitchers and bits of broken glass."

A few wore small pendants of gold as ornaments for their nostrils, and they surrendered these with equal readiness. The trinkets had a deadly fascination for the Spaniards, who elicited by signs the hint that there was much more of the yellow metal to the southwest. A larger island than Guanahani was indicated: gorgeous Cipangu, no doubt.

Then began the treachery and the rapacity that were to mark the course of the civilizers for many years. Columbus seized seven of the friendly Lucayos, to educate them as interpreters, and to deliver them later to Ferdinand and Isabella as specimens. The youngsters, though frightened, seem not to have been very resentful, may have thought it a privilege to depart with demi-gods. They little knew!

Rounding Guanahaní on the fourteenth, the Discoverer "saw so many islands that I could not decide to which I would go first." He debarked at insignificant Rum Cay on the fifteenth and gave it the resounding name of Santa María de la Concepcion. Thereafter, he drifted for nearly two weeks among the palm-fringed Bahamas and attained Cuba near the modern Banes on October 28. He traveled up and down the coast for longer than a month, convinced that he was exploring part of the Asiatic continent. It was Cipangu, or Japan, to him; nor did he know that Japan, too, was an island. He decided to give it a Spanish name, Juana.

Finally, in pursuit of his dream, he drifted past Cape Maisi south by east and on December 6 discovered Española (modernized to Hispaniola) at the Mole St. Nicholas. This is one of the best harbors in the Antilles, and Columbus was in raptures over it. Yet he sailed on and on, passing the future island of the buccaneers, which he named Tortuga, in view of its supposed resemblance to the humped shell of a turtle asleep on the ocean.

At a poor site on the north coast of Española, called La Navidad by him because he was wrecked there on Christmas Day, losing the *Santa María*, he concluded to form a Spanish settlement and leave it in the joint charge of three lieutenants, Diego de Arana, Pero Gutierrez and Rodrigo Escovedo, with thirty-nine men in all. After delays caused by moral hesitations and contrary winds, he headed back to Europe with the *Pinta* and the *Niña* on January 16, 1493, and arrived at Lisbon March 4.

Columbus skirted the Caribbean Sea at the Windward Passage, between Cuba and Española, but did not enter it. This first voyage gave him no conception of its extent or importance. Only dim rumors came to him of the civilizations and the kingdoms beyond, and these left him fairly indifferent. What had he to do with the Grand Khan? It distressed him to give up the search for the earthly paradise, but it was his firm intention to return with more ships and more men.

He had done something lasting meanwhile, though secretly he underrated it, by establishing contact with the true Arawáks of the Greater Antilles. He seems to have extolled their merits and the wealth of their lands to his sovereigns, with an eye to getting the cash for his next expedition. These Indians, as he termed them, were more developed than the fishermen of Guanahaní. They had an advanced tribal organization under their chiefs, or caciques. Columbus marveled without stint at their mildness and hospitality. He did not mistreat them, or allow his men to do so, but the gist of future Spanish policy toward them crops



out often. He wrote that they could be subdued almost without military effort, and that they would make docile servants and workers in the mines which he professed to believe were numerous. He rated them "a people very free from wickedness," and ripe for conversion to Christianity.

He showed an explorer's gusto in noting their customs, their strange agricultural products, the birds and beasts about them. There for the first time Europeans saw tobacco smoked. The little white alco, or native dog, made an impression on Columbus because it did not bark; it is now extinct. Pineapples and other novel fruit charmed his palate. But he failed really to love the American world on which he had come. His vision was of a better one, and he was in a hurry to get there.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PEOPLES OF AMERICA

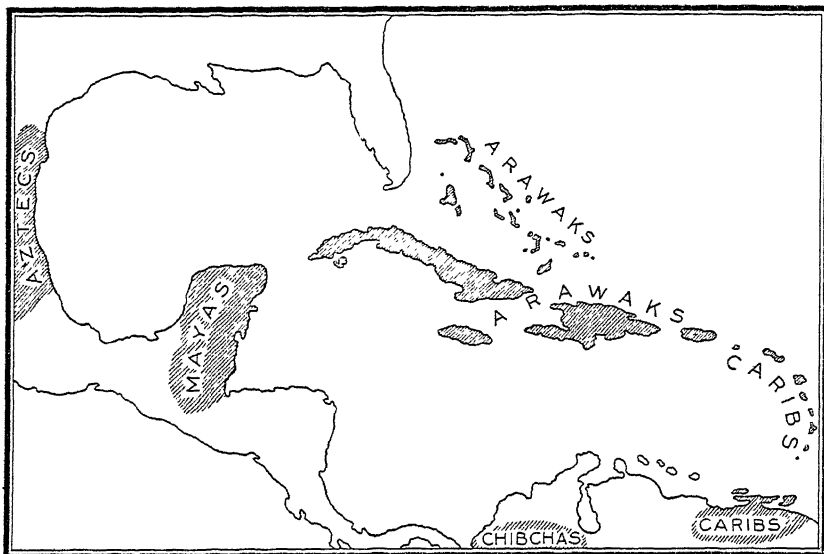
THE copper-colored mongoloid race which inhabited America prior to the discovery was divided into half a dozen important nations and a large number of independent tribes. Their centers of civilization were in the tropics. But, with one exception, that of the Mayas, they were located on lofty plateaus where the air had the tang of wine. The temperate zones, north and south, were left to nomads of a low cultural development. Wide variations in type occurred among the agriculturists and hunters of the hot, rich lands.

From the theater of the Caribbean Sea, there was almost no contact with the splendors of native achievement. The crumbling Mayan realm lay in Yucatan, the back country called the Petén and the uplands of Guatemala. The authority of the Aztec league came down to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, but its main activities, its fabulous capital, were far removed. The Chibchas, of what is now Colombia, were equally isolated on their mountain heights. Peru and the Incas were too distant for the legends about them which seeped through to have reality. We must remember that the chief nations were not seafarers and traded within circumscribed radius on land. They slowly enlarged their dominions by conquest, but discouraged the free intercourse of travel.

Countless small groups with no system of co-operation were represented among the Indians of the southern United States, Central America and Venezuela. Those of the islands were more interesting. The whole Antillean chain had originally been inhabited by Arawâks. But the Caribs, coming from South America and starting apparently at Trinidad, had pushed the Arawâks back, until at the end of the Fifteenth Century the latter possessed only the Greater Antilles and the Bahamas.

The Indians who built the largest, best canoes were these Caribs and Arawâks. They ventured only from island to island, with probable excursions on the part of the more daring to Florida and Yucatan. Native sailors may have been carried clear across the inland sea by storms; they never would have tried it voluntarily.

In the Mayan and Aztec cities, stone and sun-dried brick were used. The ceremonial structures attained to magnificence. Such building materials baffled the capacities of the Chibchas, who architecturally



The Indians of the Caribbean

had not progressed beyond the age of wood. Yet all three of these civilized nations were skillful artificers in gold and expert weavers. They went clad gorgeously, their cloth being the equal of any that has been made and their mosaic featherwork uniquely beautiful. In addition to the bow and arrow, effective weapons of copper and stone had been wrought.

Not so the dwellers on the coasts and islands, who had some knowledge of the decorative arts, but whose culture otherwise was primitive. They were a naked people, with a liking for paint. They manufactured rude ornaments of gold, stone beads, headdresses of feathers, aprons of palm leaves or woven "cotton" from the ceiba tree, earthenware bowls, simple tools and weapons, baskets for domestic purposes. Hammocks should be mentioned specially, because they invented them. The Caribs had excellent bows and arrows. The Arawáks were confined to the use of darts and war clubs. All the tribes built huts of palm thatch, sometimes plastered with mud, the roofs high-pitched. The Caribs adopted a rectangular construction, and the Arawáks a circular one.

The aboriginal population around the Caribbean Sea when the Spaniards arrived cannot be computed. Columbus and all early observers believed it to be enormous. Without doubt, they exaggerated. Bartolomé de las Casas, pioneer historian and friend of the Indians, esti-

mated that there were 6,000,000 in the islands alone. Peter Martyr was more cautious. He thought there were at least 1,200,000 in Hispaniola, and that the other territories, in proportion to their size, were somewhat less thickly inhabited. On the other hand, the population of Hispaniola has been set as low as 100,000; it is certain that in twenty years it had been reduced by the violence of the conquerors to 30,000.

Their religious practices ranged from the elaborate ritual, the gory dramatization of the Aztecs to the naïve and gentle animism of the Arawâks. The human sacrifices at the temples of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) called for the tearing of the heart from the still quivering body as a gesture of appeasement to the gods of fertility, the decapitation of girls to symbolize the reaping of ears of maize. It had developed into a blood lust, as may be perceived by comparing the hosts of annual victims with the few immolated in the rites of the Chibchas, who restricted themselves to the minimum demands of their cult in this respect.

The less civilized the less sanguinary they were, at least in matters of religion. The Arawâks believed in two supreme beings, a sky god and an earth goddess, whose spirit permeated all objects in the visible world and imparted a degree of divinity to tribal *zemes*, or demi-gods. Even the ferocious Caribs had an innocuous faith. Their cannibalism was not entangled with mysticism, but seems to have had its origin in economic necessity when the breed was struggling northward and found other meat unobtainable.

The Caribs come of the brave Guaraní stock, which has defended itself from time immemorial in the heart of South America and still constitutes the bulk of the population of Paraguay. Various legends have been preserved regarding the migration of the clans that were to play so important a part in West Indian history.

One of the most curious is to the effect that Carib was not the name of a tribe, but the designation of a superior, vigorous caste among the Guaranís. Its members were the wisest leaders, the toughest warriors. The code of the nation demanded that, when conditions became difficult through overcrowding and shortage of food, the familial lands should be left to the weak ones, and the elite, the Caribs, should open up new territory. This resulted in waves of conquest to the Amazon, the Orinoco, the southeastern shore of the Caribbean Sea and finally the Lesser Antilles. Always the van was led by heroes. They believed it was their destiny to subdue the whole world.

It is true that they were merciless in victory, and that they indulged many cruel appetites in addition to the eating of human flesh. Yet the Caribs compel admiration, because of their ardent love of liberty and

the valor with which they defended their way of life against all enemies. We shall hear much of this. It was possible to decimate the Caribs, but not to crush their pride, which was every whit as inflexible as that of the Arapahoes or Sioux of the northern plains.

One's affection, however, goes out to the wistful Arawâks, the first natives Columbus saw and of whom none are alive today. He called them "the most timorous people that there are." A just appraisal. They were soft and kind, and all they wanted was peace in their islands where there were no beasts of prey and even poisonous snakes were unknown. Ruthless warfare had been forced on them by the Caribs, and the angel of destruction already hovered when the Spaniards came. No wonder they were timorous!

By far the mildest of the Amerinds, the records that have come down to us suggest that they were on the path to evolving an Arcadian refinement that would have been Polynesian in character, say like that of the Tahitians, whom temperamentally they resembled. They were cinnamon-colored, short in stature but well formed, with dense, straight black hair. Their features had a dreamy Oriental expression, accentuated by high cheekbones and the bizarre detail of foreheads that had been flattened by binding in infancy.

Polygamy was practiced, but the woman's social position was scarcely inferior to that of the man. Each tribal group was presided over by a chief, who was also the guardian of the community's idols. He was called Cacique, and as such was entitled to more wives than anyone else. No prejudice existed against women assuming the leadership, and in a few cases chieftainesses exerted great influence.

Peter Martyr, who heard it spoken, wrote that the Arawâk language was "soft and not less liquid than the Latin . . . rich in vowels and pleasant to the ear." The words hammock, buccaneer, canoe, potato, guava and tobacco derive from it. The name of the race signifies eaters of meal, and in point of fact the chief implements of theirs which have survived are pestles and hollowed stones for the grinding of maize and cassava. Fruits were a passion with them. They varied their diet with fish, and more rarely with the flesh of birds, reptiles and the hare-like agouti of the woods.

The Arawâks left no written word, no song, and only the simplest type of oral fable. Their favorite game was played with a light ball so ingeniously constructed of roots and withes that it was quite elastic. Tournaments between villages were staged, the losers entertaining the winners at a feast. We know that they loved to dance, an art in which their sensuous grace was remarkable. They had religious and war

dances, as well as measures that were purely recreational. Debased lateral descendants of the same stock in South America today exhibit few of their virtues, and do not seem aware that the true Arawâks ever existed.

It would be impossible to draw a complete political chart of the Caribbean region just before the coming of the Spaniards. Except as it relates to the Aztec civilization, our knowledge is fragmentary. A few highlights, nevertheless, will help the reader to understand the epoch that was about to end.

In Mexico, Ahuitzotl was on the throne. He was a man of blood, a conqueror, who spent the last years of the Fifteenth Century in extending the territory of his people from ocean to ocean and penetrating to the far corners of Guatemala and Nicaragua. He dominated the league which comprised Tezcuco and Tlacopan. But he was not Emperor, that title being reserved for the Tezcucan princes who were nominally heads of the alliance. Ahuitzotl's nephew, a boy then in his early 'teens, had begun to attract attention for his quick intelligence, his aptitude both for arms and religious ceremonial. His name was Montezuma, which means severe, or mournful. It was his destiny to be elected ruler in 1502, on the death of Ahuitzotl, to thrust aside his friend, the Tezcucan monarch, Nezahualpilli, and become the first Emperor of the Aztec line.

Military practice and discipline had reached an advanced stage under Ahuitzotl. The total number of his soldiers cannot be reckoned. An army was composed of corps of eight thousand, and the latter divided into companies of from three to four hundred, each with its own commander. Their standards were not unlike those of the ancient Romans, being state and family emblems worked out in embroidery. The officers wore armor of quilted cotton, thick enough to stop arrows and light blades. The more pretentious chiefs had breastplates made of gold and silver, hammered thin. Their cloaks were of featherwork, and their helmets ordinarily of wood surmounted by plumes.

Prescott says that their tactics in battle were "such as belong to a nation with whom war, though a trade, is not elevated to the rank of a science. They advanced singing and shouting their war cries, briskly charging the enemy, as rapidly retreating, and making use of ambuscades, sudden surprises and the light skirmish of guerilla warfare. . . . They did not seek to kill their enemies, so much as to take them prisoners; and they never scalped, like other North American tribes. The valor of a warrior was estimated by the number of his prisoners."

According to the criterions of his world, King Ahuitzotl was incom-

parably the greatest force in Middle America. Next, perhaps, was that nameless Zipa, or chief, of the Chibchas on the plateau of Bogotá, who at the same period was vastly extending his political control northward. If there had been no interference from outside, the two nations would one day have met on the Isthmus of Panama, with presumably fatal consequences to the less civilized Chibchas. But in 1492, they did not have the faintest notion of each other's existence.

The marauding Caribs had commenced to raid beyond the Virgin Islands, their most recent foothold. They certainly had violated Puerto Rico, northern Hispaniola and the Bahamas. They may have touched Cuba, but never appeared in Jamaica. The scenes of their victories are unknown, their leaders anonymous.

Of the many Arawâk chiefs then living, two are remembered because of the tragic circumstances of their fall. A remarkable woman named Anacaona had become cacique of a village of some importance on the death of her brother. Hatuey, or Inhatuey, a still more striking personality, ruled a tribe near by. Both were in western Hispaniola, the section that is now the Republic of Haiti. Arawâk civilization, such as it was, had reached its highest development about that sea within a sea, the backwater of the Caribbean bounded by Jamaica, Cuba's Oriente Province and the claw-like peninsulas of Haiti.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MORE AND MORE ISLANDS

COLUMBUS quickly perceived that he was going to be assigned the role of exploiter of the lands he had found, with the implication that of course he would extend the domain. He was well received by the Spanish monarchs, who were delighted with his samples of gold and lesser treasure, beguiled by his native prisoners. His theories about Catayo and Cipangu were brushed aside. Española might be on the far edge of some Asiatic empire, but it was inhabited by barbarians and could be colonized by Spain. The son of the weaver was given the titles he had stipulated—High Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and the rest—and told to prepare a second expedition without delay. He clung tenaciously to the idea of his supreme mission, but he kept it to himself.

Europe as a whole was comparatively little stirred. Since news traveled slowly and generally was false, a wonder-monger had to appear in the midst of any given community to arouse real interest. Outside of Spain, only Portugal cared. King João II repented of having snubbed Columbus, and with a vague conception of the geography involved he feared that the gains of Portuguese explorers on the west coast of Africa and in the Orient might now be imperiled. Who knew but what there might be undiscovered islands in that quarter? He appealed to the Pope, and as a result Alexander VI, the Borgia who then sat in the Vatican, made his celebrated ruling.

By the authority of four bulls issued in 1493 and confirmed the following year by the Treaty of Tordesillas, the New World was divided between Spain and Portugal at about the fiftieth degree of longitude. Everything west of that line was to be Spanish, east of it Portuguese. This eventually decided the sovereignty of Brazil in favor of Portugal, but except in the early days the line was not strictly observed. It did make Spain paramount in the Caribbean.

Columbus had no voice in it. He had seen Ferdinand and Isabella in Barcelona, and he went from there to Seville to equip a fleet. The contrast with the preceding year was almost fantastic. Andrés Bernaldez, a recruit and the historian of the second voyage, tells us:

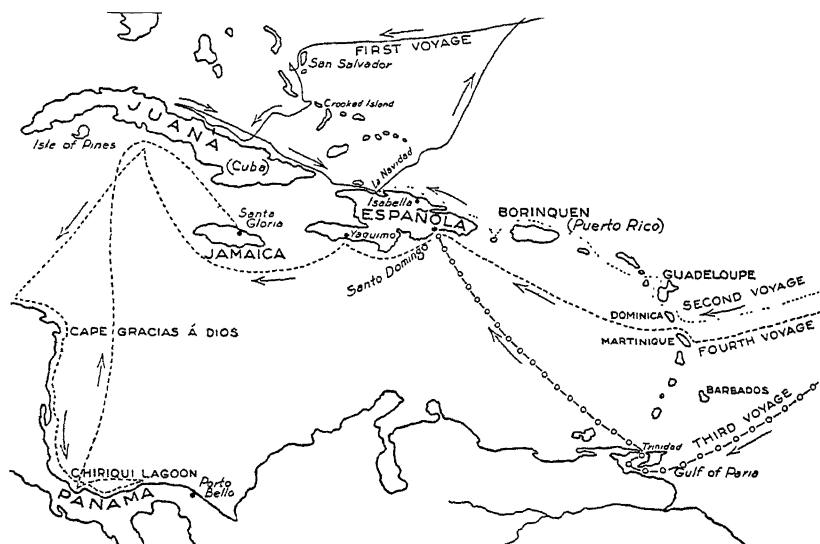
“In brief space, provision was made for the said fleet and its men, and of the food and supplies which were necessary for it, and



of captains and officers of justice and learned men and doctors and men of good counsel, and of arms, and of all the other things which were needful for it, and there were provided very good ships and specially chosen sailors, and very skilled assayers to value and refine the gold."

On September 22, 1493, seventeen ships sailed from Cádiz with some 1,200 men aboard. They included two vessels of the largest class. After calling at the Canaries, the fleet steered for a point far south of the territory already known, Columbus having in mind the stories he had heard from the Arawáks about islands from which the Caribs came to attack them. He sighted land in the Lesser Antilles on a Sunday morning early in November, found himself among six islands, as he thought, though he must have been deceived by the configuration of the coastlines into exaggerating the number. He called the most attractive Dominica in honor of the day. There was no sign of human habitation where he first went ashore. This may have been either Marie Galante or Dominica. But on several other islands visited in the next few days, he discovered human bones and similar remains under conditions that persuaded him he was among the man-eating Caribs.

On what appears to have been Guadeloupe, two Carib men were cap-



The Voyages of Columbus

tured and a number of women; but not without fighting, in which a Spaniard was mortally wounded. More than a score of Arawák women and boys gave themselves up eagerly, for they had been prisoners. Bernáldez writes:

"They [the Caribs] made raids into other islands and carried off the women, and especially such good-looking girls as they could take, whom they kept to serve them and to have children from, and this was learned from the fact that more than twenty of the captive girls were among the women who were brought to the fleet, and they said that the Caribs treated them with terrible cruelty, and, which appears to be incredible, that they ate the sons whom they bore to them, and only bring up such children as they have by women of their own race. . . . The boys whom they capture young, they are said to castrate and keep them as servants until they are full grown, or until they wish, and then they make a feast and kill them and eat them."

The fleet passed St. Croix and ran along the coast of Puerto Rico, the beauty and fertility of which impressed the Spaniards. But although they stopped in one of its harbors for two days, they were never able to establish contact with the natives, "all of whom fled as being a people terrified by the Caribs."

Española was located accurately at Samana Bay on November 22. Columbus made several calls ashore, as he directed his course toward La Navidad, only to pick up a rumor soon confirmed that the settlement had been burned and every man killed. The natives accused the Spaniards of cruelty and of having kidnaped their women. There were no witnesses on the other side, but in view of later events we may accept the charge as being true.

The Admiral's problem became that of a Governor starting from scratch. His brothers, Bartolomé and Diego, had accompanied him, to serve as officials. He had settlers and large stores, including domestic animals. But the pioneer work on which he had counted was swept away. What should he do? He began well enough by founding his city at a better site to the east and directing the preliminaries with energy. He chose a spot on the banks of a small stream, a few miles from the modern Puerto Plata, laid out streets at right angles, built a stone church and many substantial houses, and surrounded the whole with a wall and moat. European grain and vegetables were planted. He called the place Isabella, in honor of the Queen.

When it came to details of administration, however, Columbus was

not a success. His instinct was for exploration and the amassing of easy wealth. The next two years were a record of ineptitude at Isabella, of bad health, homesickness and spasmodic mutiny among the colonists he ordered to stay there, while he made forays into the interior hunting for gold and even left the island at a critical moment to pursue mirages.

Thus, he plunged at the head of four hundred men into the Cibao region, in March, 1494, before Isabella had made a fair beginning, and established a fort there. He commissioned the men he put in charge of it to punish the cacique he held guilty of destroying La Navidad, and at the same time to extort treasure from the Arawâks. A hopeless task! Columbus then decided to scour the coasts of Cuba for news of mines, and was off by the middle of April. On this trip, May 3, he discovered Jamaica as a side issue, some Cuban aborigines having told him that there was plenty of the yellow metal in an island to the south.

From his point of view, the voyage was a failure, for Jamaica of all the Greater Antilles had the least gold. He found instead an exceptionally fine type of Arawâk, never despoiled by the Caribs. Bernáldez was moved to the description of an episode which shall be quoted to serve as the ideal impression of an Arcadia so soon to vanish.

Columbus had landed on the north coast, where hospitality was offered the Spaniards. The ships then rounded the west end of the island, cruised slowly along the south coast and anchored in a bay now called Portland Bight, or Old Harbour. Bernáldez tells us:

“And a cacique of a very large village, which was on a height, came to the ships and brought to them very good supplies of food. And the Admiral gave to him and to his men of the things which he had, and they were pleased with them. And the cacique asked whence they came and what the Admiral was called, and the Admiral replied that he was a vassal of the great and most honored sovereigns, the King and Queen of Castile, his lords, who had sent him into those parts to learn about and to discover those lands and do great honor to the good and obedient and to destroy the evil-doers. This reply was made through the medium of the Indian interpreter who spoke. At it the said cacique was much pleased and inquired of the said Indian at very great length concerning things here. . . .

“And next day the Admiral departed from there. He was already under sail with a light wind when the cacique came with three canoes and overtook the Admiral. He came with so much ceremony that some description of his pomp must not be omitted. One of the canoes was as large as a large *fusta* [Spanish lateen-rigged

lighter] and brightly painted. In her he came in person, with his wife and two daughters, of whom one was a very lovely girl of some eighteen years, entirely nude, as they are wont to be there, and very modest; the other was younger. He had with him also two sons, callow youths, and five brothers and other dependents, and all the others must undoubtedly have been his vassals. In his canoe he carried as a herald a man who stood alone at the bow, wearing a loose cloak of red feathers, shaped like a coat of arms, and on his head a large plume, which looked very well. And in his hand he carried a white banner with no design on it. . . .

"The cacique wore round his neck some ornaments of *alanbre* which is called *guani* [copper, or gold of inferior quality] from an island which is in that neighborhood. It was the shape of a *fleur-de-lis*, as large as a plate. He wore it round his neck with a string of large beads of marble, which they also value highly, and on his head he wore a garland of small stones, green and red, arranged in order and intermingled with some larger white stones, producing a pleasing effect. And he wore also a large ornament hung over his forehead, and from his ears two large disks of gold were suspended by some little strings of very small green stones. Although he was naked, he wore a girdle of the same workmanship as the garland, and all the rest of his body was exposed.

"His wife was likewise adorned, naked and exposed, except that she had one single part of her person covered with a little piece of cotton no bigger than an orange leaf. On her arms, about the armpits, she wore a roll of cotton, made like the upper part of the sleeves of old-fashioned French doublets. She wore two others, also made of cotton, like these and larger, on each leg below the knee. . . .

"As soon as this cacique came alongside the ship, he began to give things from his store to the masters and to each one of the crew. It was morning and the Admiral was praying, so that he did not so soon know of the presents or the determination with which the cacique had come. Presently the cacique came on board the caravel with all his people, and when the Admiral appeared he had already sent away his servants, so that the canoes were on their way back to land and had already gone a considerable distance.

"And directly he saw the Admiral, he went up to him with a very joyous expression, saying: 'Friend, I have resolved to leave the land and to go myself with you and to behold the King and the Queen and their son, the prince, who have so much power that they have brought under their sway so many lands through you who obey them and by their command go about subduing all the world. . . . Accordingly, before you take from me my land and

dominion, I desire to go with my household in your ships with you.'

"And the Admiral, having compassion on him and on his daughters and his sons and his wife, seeing his innocence and good will, withstood him and told him that he received him as a vassal of the King of Spain and of the Queen, and that for the present he should remain where he was, since much was still left for him [Columbus] to discover, and that when he returned there would be time to fulfill his desire.

"And they plighted friendship, and so he was obliged to remain with his people and household."

Columbus returned to Española, to demonstrate anew his infinite capacity for bungling as a political chief. His colonists were not the best material to work with. They had come as adventurers who had thought to pick up nuggets in the grass, and who bent themselves unwillingly to more prosaic things. But the Genoese was not the man to get out of them what might have been got. The only remedy he knew for their turbulence was to give them action. It is true that the Court expected him to locate mines, but he led his rascals on unnecessary campaigns, antagonizing the caciques when he could have had their friendship. Religion was partly to blame. There were friars and priests along this time, all of them eager to convert at the sword's point. The year 1495 saw the whole Arawâk population stung into resistance, their lotus-eating foregone and their hearts broken.

Baffled, Columbus decided to go back to Spain, enlist better men and set the stage for what really mattered to him—a third voyage of exploration. He sailed in March, 1496, appointing Bartolomé to be Adelantado, or Lieutenant-Governor, during his absence, with Diego, his other brother, designated to take over in the event of accident. This nepotism, characteristic of the age, was a first-class error. Neither Bartolomé nor Diego had the least talent as an executive. They meant to the colonists the perpetuation of an unpopular name.

At the Escorial, also, the glory of the Admiral had begun to tarnish. Ferdinand and Isabella had supposed that he would pour wealth into their treasury, but it became increasingly clear to them that the development of the Indies was bound to be an expense. They balked. Columbus, in despair, suggested that criminals should be transported to Española, to meet a sheer deficiency of labor. Not those who had been guilty of heinous vice, or convicted of heresy, he explained virtuously; just normal sinners. To his future sorrow, this idea was adopted, and three shiploads of jailbirds were sent out. It proved not so easy to

arrange other matters, and two years passed before Columbus was equipped for his own new venture.

It was in every way a less imposing affair than the second voyage had been. Instead of seventeen vessels, he had six. Rivals had cropped up, captains who saw no point in serving under him and wanted to go to the islands independently. This was not permitted for the moment, and the ambitious held aloof, biding their time.

He took a course so southerly that it was reckless, in view of his ignorance where it would land him and the fact that, after all, most of his people were bound for Española. But he followed the dream within a dream, which was never to materialize for him. No real dangers were encountered. His luck with the weather, so far, had been phenomenal. He discovered Trinidad, then cruised in the gulf between that large island and the South American mainland. There, as has been mentioned, the cross-currents from the mouths of the Orinoco amazed, but moved him to the sage reflection that such power could only have been generated in a continent.

He met Caribs, who were bold and war-like and seemed more civilized to him than the Arawâks. On one occasion, twenty-five men in a canoe approached within gunshot and showed a wary scorn of the "small brass boxes and other shining things," with which the Spaniards sought to excite their interest. "The Admiral ordered a tambourine to be brought up to the poop, and the young men of the ship to dance, believing that it would please them," runs the Journal of the third voyage. "But they did not so regard it; on the contrary, as they saw them playing and dancing, they regarded it as a signal for war, and as being a defiance of them. They abandoned all the oars and laid hands upon their bows and arrows, and each taking his shield they began shooting at them a great cloud of arrows."

The answer was made with crossbows. But no one was killed, and the bellicose exchange did not prevent the Caribs from accepting a truce a few minutes later and mingling fearlessly with the Spaniards.

In the Gulf of Paria and among the islands beyond the strait he called the Dragon's Mouth, Columbus obtained specimens of pearls which aroused his cupidity. But to save the perishable goods aboard his ships, he was forced to cut short the quest for jewels. He drew a bee-line across the Caribbean to Española, which he reached without sighting other land on August 31, 1498.

He had added very little, so far, to man's knowledge of the new Mediterranean. Three voyages made within six years had revealed an arc of islands which might be located in mid-ocean for all that Colum-

bus could tell. True, he had a conviction that there was a *Tierra Firme*, as he termed it, but he imagined this to extend north from Cuba, south of Trinidad. He had no understanding of the vast continental mass due west of the Antilles, no notion of the Caribbean as an inland sea.

The continents were to withhold their secrets from him, but not the Caribbean, the nature of which it was his destiny to establish on the fourth and last voyage.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE LAST OF COLUMBUS

WE HAVE reached the point where Spanish political history, apart from exploration, begins in the West Indies. During the absence of Columbus, but at his orders, the Adelantado, Bartolomé, had gone to the mouth of the Ozama on the south coast, and on a site infested with stinging ants had there laid the first stone of a town which was shortly to receive the name of Santo Domingo and to be moved from the left to the right bank of the river. An imperial capital was thus obscurely founded on August 4, 1496, though the date often given is 1502, when the rebuilding was started.

In abortive Isabella, Columbus faced a problem characteristic of all that was to come. A stronger man than either of his brothers was in open rebellion. Francisco Roldán, the alcalde-mayor, or chief judge, had grown disgusted with the lack of discipline and the poor results being obtained. In seizing power and taking from the public storehouses what was needed to keep the colony moving, he quoted his duty to his sovereigns. There is much that could be said in favor of Roldán, the first Spanish-American revolutionist. He was fundamentally an honest fellow. He came to terms with the Admiral, on the basis of no reprisals, and took up his residence in the province of Xaragua, the southern peninsula of what is now Haiti and the most westerly part of the island. Thereafter, he proved loyal enough.

But Columbus was aghast at the crop which he himself had sown. Roldán's bravos, without whom the rebel and the few solid men who were with him could not have defied the Adelantado, had been drawn from the three shiploads of convicts transported from Spain. This element continued to give trouble. Most of them followed Roldán when he moved to Xaragua. The district was ruled by the extraordinary female cacique, Anacaona, who was friendly to the Spaniards. She had a daughter named Higüeymota, a small, sweet thing, said by Las Casas to have been Roldán's mistress. It is at least certain that Higüeymota fell in love with Fernando de Guevara, a young man of good family, and that Roldán presently charged Guevara with a capital offense and sent him to Santo Domingo to be judged. If this was done to end the



liaison, its place in history is among the momentous acts of jealousy, for it helped to destroy Columbus.

The latter had other worries at the moment. He had learned that Ferdinand and Isabella, dissatisfied with the slow development of affairs, were issuing permits for independent voyages to the Indies. True, the leaders of such expeditions were forbidden to impinge on territory already discovered by the Admiral. But the prohibition was soon flouted.

Alonso de Ojeda raided the pearl fisheries in the Gulf of Paria, using a map copied from the original which Columbus had furnished to his sovereigns. This Ojeda even had the audacity to cruise to Española. He landed in Xaragua, attempted to stir up the former partisans of Roldán and to take Arawáks as slaves. He was driven off. Rivals crowded at his heels. There came Vicente Yáñez Pinzon, captain of the *Niña* on the original voyage of discovery; Peralonso Niño and Cristóbal Guerra. All of these sought pearls on the coast of Venezuela, without realizing what the continent offered.

But Columbus felt that his prestige had been wrecked. His larger domain was being invaded and he could not control the miserable colony under his hand. In a mood of profound despondency, he wrote a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella which, according to Cecil Jane, afforded them the chance to carry out an intention they had formed. He described the anarchy in his Government and admitted that he was unable to suppress it. The settlers who hailed from Castile, he said, were particularly unsuited to their task, for they were incurably mutinous, incurably idle and motivated by greed. He urged that they be replaced by a body of respectable married men. Meanwhile, he made the fatal request that a legal assistant should be sent him, some man "bearing a special royal commission, to assume effective control of the administration of justice."

There can be no doubt that, in his weakness, he believed that he, the great Discoverer, could legitimately ask to be propped up by an official who would obey him. It is equally sure that Ferdinand and Isabella intended merely to have his regime probed, though anticipating that the report probably would make it necessary to replace him as Governor. Instead of a legal assistant, they sent a *juez pesquisidor*, a judge charged with an assembling of evidence to be laid before a higher court. They sent Francisco de Bobadilla, whose name has been heaped with infamy by most historians, but who appears rather to have been austere and vigorous, a man who stood for no nonsense.

Bobadilla landed at Santo Domingo on August 23, 1500, found Diego

Columbus there and immediately had him arrested. This was done to prevent Diego from going ahead with the execution of Guevara, the lover of Higueymota, then in the castle under sentence of death. Bobadilla reviewed the case and released Guevara.

The Admiral was in the north, Bartolomé in Xaragua. When the former heard what had taken place, he denied the authority of Bobadilla and forbade obedience to his orders. But he did not attempt to fight; there is ample evidence that, had he done so, few would have supported him. He went to Santo Domingo, where Bobadilla ruthlessly put him in fetters and sequestered his property. Bartolomé arrived and was accorded the same treatment. Shortly afterward, all three members of the family were placed aboard a ship bound for Cádiz.

Jane writes that the career of Columbus "ended in reality when he sailed for Spain a prisoner." This opinion cannot be endorsed. The fourth voyage was of vast significance in the field where the genius of the Admiral shone, that of exploration. The King and Queen received him kindly, ordered his property restored, and readily agreed in principle to his making a fourth voyage. If they did not allow him to resume office in Santo Domingo, it was because they were executives who knew their business. They told him that he still enjoyed his title of Viceroy and Governor-General of all the lands he had discovered, yet expressly barred him from setting foot again in Española.

They considered that Bobadilla had behaved dubiously and arranged that the *Juez Pesquisidor* should be replaced by Nicolás de Ovando, the latter to be Governor. Such matters moved slowly. Bobadilla had a year and a half in office, while his successor remained for seven years.

The High Admiral, meanwhile, found it impossible to hasten the accomplishment of his own projects. He spent an unhappy two years in Spain. Friends and foes alike were willing that he should go back to the New World, but there was little enthusiasm about backing him. Past services were secondary to the fact that he had lost prestige and pitied himself inordinately. He haunted the Court, moving where it moved, partly in the interests of his two sons, Diego and Fernando. After the first voyage they had been appointed pages in the royal household. Columbus was anxious now to obtain assurances that his eldest born would inherit not only his titles, but a viceregal position in America. He won a promise to this effect. There was not much that could be done for the younger son, Fernando, because he was illegitimate. He decided to take him with him to the Indies.

Four ships were finally assembled, and one of them was not in good condition. Four ships, as against six the time before and the flotilla of

seventeen that had made the second voyage. It was a commentary on the fading fortunes of the Discoverer. He sailed from Cádiz, May 9, 1502, crossed the Atlantic without incident and paused at Martinique. Until then, on all the voyages, his luck with the weather had been uncommon. With his arrival in the Lesser Antilles late in June there began a series of storms, some of hurricane force, which pursued him to the end. It was like a persecution, for Columbus was a wretched sailor and panic-stricken in a storm.

Having been refused permission again by the sovereigns even to touch at a port in Española, he had intended to steer straight for Jamaica and then to diverge westward into uncharted seas. The first tempest caused him to change his plans, mainly because he feared that his weakest boat, the *Santiago de Palos*, would founder. He took a chance on going to Santo Domingo and sending one of his captains ashore to ask that he be allowed to buy a new ship. He also made the prediction that a great hurricane was imminent, and begged for shelter inside the harbor. Governor Ovando, recently arrived and obedient to orders from home, refused him all facilities.

Columbus fled down the coast and found safety. He was vindicated as a prophet, for the scourge descended. The importance of this storm in the history of Santo Domingo will be noted in the next chapter. Such weather in June was unseasonable. There is a folk rhyme current in the British West Indies which neatly summarizes the hurricane expectancy:

June, too soon.  
July, stand by.  
August, don't trust.  
September, remember.  
October, all over.

The Admiral made his way painfully to the north coast of Jamaica, but was rolled back to the cays south of Cuba which he had called El Jardín de la Reina. He then pursued a wavering course, God knew where, pounded by terrific billows, until he entered the Gulf of Honduras and saw the Bay Islands. "Nor did the storm from heaven cease," he wrote Ferdinand and Isabella. "There was rain and thunder and lightning continuously, so that it seemed as if it were the end of the world." At last he rounded a cape, and with that enjoyed a milder sea, a following wind. He was so thankful that he named it Cape Gracias a Dios. It is the point of Central America that juts farthest east.

By crossing the comparatively narrow way between Cuba and Honduras, and subsequently by tracing the coast down to the Isthmus of

Panama, Columbus gained a rough conception of the Caribbean as an inland sea. He perceived that the western boundary must be a continent and clung to the belief that it was Asia. There is a passage in his last letter to the monarchs which has been construed to mean that he had heard a report of the Pacific and realized its existence. But this is canceled by other interior evidence.

He spent some ten months off Central America in wretched circumstances. Gone was the magic touch that had raised a glittering island at the foot of every rainbow. This was a swampy, malarious shore, inhabited by natives who were not friendly, who sometimes cut off landing parties, but who wore little disks of polished gold hanging at the neck—an ineffable lure. The weather was consistently bad. Sea worms riddled the ships below the waterline. One vessel was lost at the mouth of the Belén River, and another had to be abandoned at Porto Bello.\*

But despite all difficulties Columbus explored the coastal fringe of Veragua, spending some time in the Chiriqui Lagoon and at other points. He regarded this as the signal achievement of the voyage, because of his illusions concerning treasure. "In this land of Veragua," he wrote, "I saw greater evidence of gold on the first two days than in Española in four years." He firmly believed that the legendary mines of King Solomon were located there, and quoted the Bible to prove it.

There is a Veragua province in the modern republic of Panama, but the territory Columbus called by that name included also the eastern end of Costa Rica. The exact limits of the region were long a matter of dispute. Fantastically, Veragua, where he pursued his last mirage, and Jamaica, where complete disaster overtook him, were to be the holdings which the Crown recognized as being indubitably his and from which derived the permanent titles granted his descendants.

Early in May, 1503, he left the deceptive coast, and notwithstanding his virtuous assurance to the sovereigns that he "would not have gone to Española, even if the ships had been fit to do so," it is probable that that was where he had hoped to disembark. He fetched up among the Cuban cays, was driven almost desperate by the wallowing of his boats in rough seas, and had to make a supreme effort to attain the nearest land. On June 24 he beached both vessels at Santa Gloria, the modern St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, where they promptly began to fall to pieces. The Admiral was a castaway. An entire year passed before he was rescued from this predicament.

The march of empire went on without Columbus. Few cared what had become of the outmoded and unlovable Genoese. None tried to

\* Porto Bello is one of the few geographical names in which *puerto* (port) has been corrupted to *porto* in modern Spanish.

find him, and even after his whereabouts was known his rescue was purposely delayed. Now, indeed, his active career was at an end. It would have been better tragic drama if he had died in Jamaica. For he looms darkly during his sojourn on the island, a figure of futility, as portrayed by himself in his two famous letters, one to the sovereigns, the other to Juana de la Torre, a nurse in the royal household. His son, Fernando, who started on the voyage at the age of thirteen, wrote a history. His companion at arms, Diego Méndez, indicted a garrulous last will and testament in 1536. Both tried in vain to gild the closing scenes. It is one of the most curious episodes in the history of the Caribbean.

The wrecked caravels were converted into shelters, by roofing them with palm branches, we may presume, though the chroniclers say straw. The survivors from four vessels had been aboard them, 230 men in all, a larger force than that with which the Spaniards achieved many of their conquests. Pizarro, for instance, was presently to attack the mighty Inca realm with 180 men. Yet Columbus kept his force huddled for weeks in their decaying ships and doled out the biscuits and wine that remained. His lethargy appears to have been complete.

The Arawâks came and stared from a distance. They were of the same people who had been dazzled by him and with whom he had dealt like a proud viceroy on his second voyage. He shrank from any new contact with them. He showed not the least interest in the rich countryside, the rolling woodlands interspersed with grassy savannas, and the towering blue mountains beyond. It was all a wilderness to him. He was dead to the exotic birds and flowers that had once beguiled him.

When the rations were exhausted, Diego Méndez was forced to act. "I took a sword and three men with me," he related in his testament, "because no one dared to go to seek food for the Admiral and those who were with him. I found the people so gentle that they did me no ill, but were friendly and gave me food with good will." He arranged with a cacique that the latter's people should bake cassava bread and bring it to the ships every day, along with supplies of fish, for which payment would be made in trinkets, such as blue beads, combs and hawks' bells. It was a big order, so two other caciques were visited. All of them consented with the utmost geniality, but they deferred action while some young fellows showed Méndez about the island.

He traveled to the far eastern end, where he bought a big canoe from a fourth chief for "a very good brass helmet which I carried in a bag, and a cloak and one of the two shirts which I had." It was loaded with provisions. Six Indians were assigned to paddle it for him, and he returned by sea to Santa Gloria.

The unconscious irony of this narrative is mordant. For Columbus "embraced me and asked about all that had occurred on the expedition, giving thanks to God who had delivered me in safety from so savage a people. At that time there was not a crust to eat in the ships and all were glad with my coming, for hunger was killing them. And after that every day the Indians came laden with provisions to the ships from those places where I had made agreements, and there was enough."

Next to the Lucayos, the Jamaican Arawâks were the mildest natives in the Antilles, and they were more intelligent than the Lucayos. The Spaniards would all have been welcomed in their villages as guests. A few of the sailors perceived this, deserted and were lost forever to the gloomy Christian world. But Columbus, gripped by a neurosis of frustration, trembled at dangers that were imaginary at the time. In ten days he was moaning that the Arawâks were fickle, that they would soon get tired of bringing food and would burn the ships. Did Méndez think it possible to cross to Española in his big canoe and ask for help?

Slyly the man-at-arms spoke of "murmurers who have said that your lordship entrusts to me all honorable tasks." He considered this one practically hopeless, but he would attempt it if nobody else would. Why not call for volunteers? It was done, without results. So Diego Méndez, after making a false start, performed the historical feat of paddling blue water to Cape San Miguel (now Tiburón), Española, in five days and four nights. He had one Spaniard and six Arawâks with him.

At that western tip of the island, the people were at yet unspoiled. They greeted Méndez happily and brought food to him. But as he proceeded down the coast, he came upon troubles in the province of Xaragua. He heard that Governor Ovando was in the interior, and hurried there to him with the news.

The action of Ovando in not sending at once to rescue Columbus has been bitterly condemned, but not by Diego Méndez. The latter remarks simply, "He detained me for seven months," and goes on to state that no ships arrived from Spain during a period of more than a year around the time of his arrival. When three finally entered port, Méndez bought one of them, without interference by Ovando, loaded her with "provisions, bread and wine, flesh and pigs and sheep," and sent her to Jamaica to fetch the Admiral.

These adventurers have an airy disregard for details. One wonders where on earth Méndez got the means to finance this ark of plenty. Had he lugged a bag of the treasures of Veragua in his big canoe and through the wilds of Española? Or were there a few grateful souls who lent him the money for the sake of days gone by? He and his kind see

no point in explaining. The sweeping gesture is what they love, whether their deeds are of historical import or otherwise. They did certain things, and they tell us the main facts and let it go at that.

Ovando belatedly sent a small craft under Diego de Escobar to carry food to Columbus and report on the situation, but not to bring back the castaways. It is proper to recall that Ovando had categorical orders to bar the Admiral from Española. Though he clearly would have to allow him to land in the circumstances, he no doubt thought it better that Méndez should do the rescuing.

Meanwhile, what of Columbus in exile? He quickly lost control over his men. There was a serious revolt under the Porras brothers. Then the Spaniards started to maltreat and antagonize the Indians, who naturally ceased to furnish supplies. The Admiral faced this situation imaginatively, showed a flash of his old mastery. The accounts differ as to whether it was necessary merely to assure a sufficiency of food, or whether he feared a massacre. But all agree that he turned a clever trick, which has since been ascribed to—and may well have been imitated by—more than one explorer at bay among a naïve and hostile people.

Aware from astronomical calculations that there would be a total eclipse of the moon on a certain night, he summoned all the caciques in the neighborhood and told them that he would cause the moon to be devoured before their eyes. God was angry with them, he said, for not treating him better, he who had been sent among them by God. The caciques were skeptical, but it was only human nature to wait and see what would happen. When the eclipse materialized, they fell into a panic. Columbus interceded with the Deity, and lo the moon was restored! After that, there were no more difficulties with the Arawâks.

But the Discoverer had never been more melancholy, suffering as he was from gout and the symptoms of other maladies which were soon to prove mortal. He winds up his letter to the sovereigns by asking all the world to weep for him, and "if it please God to bring me forth from this place, that you will be pleased to permit me to go to Rome and to other places of pilgrimage."

He was elated, briefly, when the rescue ship arrived, spent a wretched month in Santo Domingo, then sailed for Spain. He landed on November 7, 1504. On the twenty-sixth died Queen Isabella, his real sponsor and best friend. Dejectedly, he followed the Court from city to city. It was in Valladolid in the spring of 1506, and there on May 20 the Admiral succumbed at the age of about sixty. King Ferdinand wrote an epitaph for him in Latin:

"To Castile and León, Columbus gave a New World."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### IMPERIAL PRELUDE

UNDER Bobadilla and Ovando, the colony of Española had taken form rapidly. The first-named had improved the administration, and then had tackled the question of labor. He had time for little else. Columbus in his despair had committed the error of conceding to Roldán's malcontents the right to work their lands with the forced labor of a certain number of Indians. It had not been intended that the practice should be widespread, or permanent. But Bobadilla seized upon it as a good idea and created the system known as the *repartimiento*, which spread to all parts of the New World occupied by Spain. It was virtual slavery. The more robust Indians, and notably those who had been accustomed to a feudal order, were able to survive until better days. The delicate Arawâks, for whom it was invented, perished under it wholesale.

*Repartimiento* means a dividing up, a portioning out of the aborigines to the service of their conquerors. *Encomienda* was soon substituted by the sovereigns and the Church, because this word connotes a temporary "commendation." The masters were charged, in theory, with giving their serfs religious instruction, while training them to do useful work, and those who could measure up to Spanish standards were supposed to evolve into a free peasantry. Actually, the terms became synonymous. The old historians use both of them, and thereby cause confusion. *Repartimiento* is preferable, since it is simpler and less hypocritical.

Bobadilla had scarcely got his projects under way than Nicolás de Ovando arrived in April, 1502, to supersede him. The new Governor's flotilla was the largest that had yet been seen. It consisted of thirty-two ships with 2,500 settlers, abundant supplies and munitions of war, including artillery. A few Negro slaves, believed to have been the first in America, were among the importations. They were Spanish trained and, in view of the decision to harness the Arawâks, they were resented as an extravagance. Not ten years passed, however, before a regular traffic in Africans was authorized, to fill the places of scores of thousands of dead Arawâks.

The return voyage of the fleet was arranged with unusual promptitude, chiefly to hasten the departure of Bobadilla. Roldán, the ex-insur-



gent, also was going back to Spain, by order of the Crown. As the ships lay off the mouth of the Ozama River, two months afterward, ready to sail, Columbus appeared on his fourth voyage and made his famous prediction of a hurricane. We have seen that the Discoverer was refused shelter at Santo Domingo, but made his way to safety. The home-bound fleet was destroyed, and among the many drowned were the arrogant Bobadilla, the fierce Roldán. Few tempests have had such far-reaching results. For Santo Domingo was leveled, this proving in the long run to be a gain. The town was then transferred to the other side of the river, its natural site.

Isabella, definitely supplanted as the seat of Government and deserted by most of its inhabitants, relapsed into the jungle.

Ovando continued the *repartimiento*. He softened the conditions of labor a little, but felt that a necessary corollary was to bring every part of the island under complete domination. The provinces of Higüey in the extreme east and Xaragua in the west were semi-independent. A few Spaniards had been killed in the former, and the Governor used this as an excuse for waging a campaign along up-to-date military lines such as the Arawáks had never experienced. They offered a surprisingly tenacious resistance, but of course were crushed. More than half their man power died in battle, or committed suicide. Most of their leaders were captured and executed.

The business of the Xaragua chieftainess, Anacaona, was handled differently and with even less credit to the Spaniards. We do not have to depend for the indictment on Las Casas, friend of the Indians. Herrera and Oviedo admit that there was treachery, though they maintain that Anacaona's friendly attitude had changed, that the whites were justified in what they did because she had hatched a conspiracy against them. It is an old, sad story, which moved Las Casas to philippics, Queen Isabella to anger and Washington Irving three centuries later to his most romantic prose.

After publicly announcing his intention, Ovando went in person to Xaragua, at the head of three hundred foot and seventy horse, to receive the tribute he declared was due the Crown. The cavalry were a great wonder to a people who had never seen a horse until the Spaniards came. Anacaona advanced to meet the Governor, attended by large numbers of her people, dancing and singing. The accounts which speak of her as a queen, describe her royal palace and her three hundred nobles, are florid exaggerations. She conducted Ovando to a clearing in the forest where stood an Arawák village more elaborate than the average, and held a feast for him which lasted several days.

There is a tale, difficult to credit, of caciques kidnaped at this time and secretly tortured until they confessed to a plot. But it is certain that Ovando proclaimed a return feast, and insisted that the important men of the entire province must be present. When the Indians had gathered, they were set upon and butchered. The lesser caciques made prisoner were tied to the posts of a temporary shelter erected for the Spaniards, and the torch applied. Anacaona was taken to Santo Domingo, tried, condemned and hanged in the square.

One significant figure escaped, the independent western cacique Hatuey, who showed remarkable enterprise by fleeing to Cuba in canoes filled with his subjects.

Xaragua gave no more trouble. Higüey revolted two years later, but the leader, Cotubanama, was speedily captured and removed to the capital to be executed. Thus perished the last of the original Española caciques, and with his passing, resistance to the Spaniards ended. The rapidity with which the race faded out of existence is a phenomenon almost without parallel. If agricultural labor had been exclusively required of them, they probably could have stood it. But they were herded into the mines, the sterile mines of an island where tons of earth had to be excavated in the mountains, bushels of sand washed in the river beds, to isolate a few ounces of gold.

Despite his pertinacity in this occupation so wasteful of life and time, but which his monarchs favored, Ovando was a practical executive. He busily founded new towns, and in 1504 reported the existence of fifteen. Santiago de los Caballeros, in the Vega Real, became the one of next importance to the capital.

Sugar cane having been brought from the Canaries in 1506 and grown with striking success in the virgin soil, Ovando urged the colonists to make it their chief crop. Crude machinery was set up, and the industry that was to enrich the West Indies got under way with a rush. Rum, its by-product, was soon manufactured.

The year 1507 saw such a shortage of labor that the importation of natives from near-by islands was ordered. The earliest victims were the trustful Lucayos. Some violence was employed, but the Spaniards found it less expensive to use guile. The Lucayos were told that Española was the blessed land of the beyond, and that by going there they would meet their departed ancestors. As a result of this fraud, a few thousands came willingly. Nor did they fail to reach "the beyond," if death were what was meant, a conscience-salving quibble typical of the age. The rest had to be trapped, or in some cases run down with dogs.

But the colony began really to flourish. We must bear clearly in mind that it was the only European colony in the New World, and that the Spaniards still cherished the wildest misconceptions of that world. Their pioneering valor was stupendous. Española was a foothold on the edge of the unknown. So it remained until the end of Ovando's governorship in 1509. He had neither the leisure nor the inclination to seek fresh countries, though in 1508 he did send Juan Ponce de León to begin the penetration of Puerto Rico and Sebastián de Ocampo to circumnavigate Cuba and prove that it was an island.

Meanwhile, there had been two voyages of major significance, the expedition led by Rodrigo de Bastidas, and immediately after it the fourth voyage of Columbus.

Bastidas was a wealthy notary of Seville, licensed to fit out an expedition at his own cost and risk and make discoveries in that "Ocean Sea" of which Columbus was nominally the overlord. Three-fourths of the plunder obtained was to go to Bastidas, one-fourth to the Crown. A young fellow of good family, named Vasco Núñez de Balboa, enlisted under him. This was the salient name in a company that otherwise is scarcely remembered.

Bastidas steered his two ships for Venezuela and methodically explored the coast from the point farthest east that his predecessors had touched. He sailed along the entire littoral of Colombia, trading with the Indians for pearls and gold. He was the discoverer, in 1501, of the Magdalena and Atrato Rivers, the superb harbor of Cartagena, the Gulf of Darién and the Isthmus of Panama. Near the bay of Nombre de Dios he turned, having left no mark behind him, and started back to Spain, by way of Jamaica and Española. He had extended the known boundaries of the Caribbean proper, leaving the Central American coast as the last gap, to be closed by Columbus in 1502.

No further important exploration was projected until the middle of 1508, when King Ferdinand signed capitulations with the already mentioned Alonzo de Ojeda and with one Diego de Nicuesa, a courtier. They were to conquer the American mainland. Each was made Governor for four years, with full powers, but how their vast territory was to be divided between them was left vague. Each was to furnish ships and supplies at his own cost. They might enslave the Indians. These ill-starred men merely broke ground for their abler lieutenants, among whom were Balboa and Pizarro. The story was so long a time unfolding that events in the islands should be considered first.

Diego Columbus, known in history as the Second Admiral, had inherited his father's position as Viceroy of the Indies. The suspension

ordered by the sovereigns had died with the old Admiral. Theoretically, Diego could have sailed to Española in May, 1506, and taken over from Ovando. The right had been confirmed in so many words. But Diego found obstacles placed in his way, and he probably did the one essential thing to remove them when in 1508 he married the very great lady, Maria de Toledo y Rojas, niece of the Duke of Alba and related on her mother's side to the King himself. His appointment to be Governor of Española followed shortly afterward. The terms of his commission evaded the use of the title of Viceroy, though in effect he was given a certain control over near-by possessions of the Crown, and his wife was formally styled "Vireina."

Don Diego, who was not yet thirty years of age—the date of his birth is uncertain—came to Santo Domingo in 1509 with a glittering retinue. For the first time, a number of women of good family accompanied their husbands. Social gaiety and the pomp of a court suddenly blossomed in the little city on the Ozama, which now entered the period of its greatest prosperity. It was Spain's capital in the New World. All the early conquistadores passed through it. Its position was not seriously challenged for a generation.

The new Governor showed far more executive talent than his father. Don Diego was not a great man, but he was a capable one, and quite ruthless, as befitted the times. He accepted the servitude of the Indians as a matter of course, was impatient with the evangelistic priest, Las Casas, for denouncing the *repartimiento*, and refined on the system by specifying the exact number to be allotted to each person according to his rank. He began the wholesale importation of Negro slaves in 1511, a move which Las Casas misguidedly commended on the grounds that it would lighten the labors of the Indians. The African traffic had been authorized a few months previously as one of the activities of the Casa de Contratacion, a combined board of trade and commercial court, which acted in Seville as a clearing house for American shipping.

The year of his arrival, the Governor sent Juan de Esquivel to subdue Jamaica, an easy task. The next year he decided on the conquest of Cuba. He chose as leader of the expedition Diego de Velasquez, who had distinguished himself since his arrival with Christopher Columbus in 1493. Velasquez had been active against the Arawáks of the province of Xaragua, had quelled an important region cruelly but with an efficiency that had caused him to be marked for promotion. He had been one of Ovando's deputies for purposes of local administration, had been given a large tract of land and had made himself the richest man in the island.

As was customary, Velasquez was invited to bear most of the expense of the Cuban adventure, with the governorship promised him in the event of success. He eagerly accepted and spent his money lavishly on the three or four ships he assembled, the equipment of the three hundred men who enlisted under him. Very late in 1510, or during the first days of January, 1511, he steered past Cape Maisi and landed a few miles beyond on the north coast. He camped on the site of Baracoa, made it his base of operations and founded there the oldest town in Cuba.

The Spaniards faced an unexpected problem. The district was in arms and ready to oppose them, under none other than Hatuey, the fugitive cacique from Española. This lordly man was the most impressive figure ever produced to our knowledge by the Arawâk race. If he and his tribe had not been persecuted, he simply would have made a good chief, for he showed no signs of megalomania, no lust of conquest. On the other hand, he was valorous and shrewd, a natural captain, and the sophistication of his spirit compared favorably with that of any leader encountered afterward among the civilized Aztec and Inca peoples.

His experience with Ovando's war of extermination had convinced him that truce with the whites was meaningless. Before he fled, he had fought against Velasquez himself. He was readily accepted as a virtual king in Cuba, where he preached that if the Spaniards came it would be better to die resisting them than to surrender with the certainty of being enslaved, tortured and at last killed. According to Las Casas, he employed spies to watch the situation in Española, and was informed of Velasquez's project at every stage.

Hatuey was powerless to prevent the landing. But he collected his followers and allies, told them once more in an impassioned speech what the natives of the sister island had suffered and got their promise to fight. He had had a vessel filled with gold ore placed in front of him.

"This is the god of our enemies," he cried dramatically. "They seek for him in every place, and where they find him they remain. If he were hidden in the holes of the rocks, they would discover him. If we were to swallow him, they would plunge their hands into our bowels and drag him out. Let us cast him into the sea. Perhaps when he is no longer among us, we shall be forgotten by them."

The ceremony was performed, the Arawâks throwing after the crude ore all the gold ornaments they possessed. It was marvelous symbolism. Hatuey then plagued the Spaniards in a brilliant guerrilla campaign, but not for long. Captured through the treachery of some Indians, and

sentenced to be burned at the stake as a "rebellious slave," he died with imperturbable courage at the village of Jaxa. A Franciscan friar advanced at the last moment and offered the consolations of the Church. If he allowed himself to be baptized, the friar said, his soul would be transported straight to Heaven.

Hatuey exhibited no skepticism. He probably believed that the God of the Spaniards was one of many. "Is that where you go when you die?" he asked.

He was assured that such was the case.

"Then let me be," he answered scornfully. "I would rather not go to your Heaven if I am to meet Christians there."

The leadership fell to Caguax, also a native of Española. But Caguax was no Hatuey. Before long, he was taken and executed.

The rapid subjugation and exploitation of Cuba that followed marked Spain's first notable advance beyond Española. The work was done more competently than had been the case in the mother colony. This sprang partly from the fact that the Spaniards were acquiring a technique suitable to their problem, and partly to the special gifts of Velasquez. The latter had an emotional grip on his followers, and he was practical. He is described as a virile example of manhood, with graceful presence, fair face and abundant blond hair. Women adored him. He became Spain's first great colonizer in the islands, and his historical stature is thus assured. But in a larger sense, he was one of the two most unfortunate conquistadores. The other was Balboa. As will be seen, the first should have been the master of Mexico instead of Cortés, and the second the master of Peru instead of Pizarro.

Velasquez had chosen the personnel of his expedition carefully. He had several valiant captains and better priests than the average. Everything considered, he must be credited with the intention to deal mildly with the Indians, as is indicated by the presence of Las Casas in his train. In addition, he sent to Jamaica for Pánfilo de Narváez, a dashing adventurer who was personally devoted to him. Narváez had gone to the smaller island the previous year with Esquivel. He arrived presently at the Baracoa fort accompanied by thirty expert crossbowmen and Jamaican Arawák servants.

Between them, Velasquez and Narváez pacified eastern Cuba without undue severity in a few months. Then Narváez returned from a foray to the village where Bayamo now stands, found that his chief had left it in charge of his young nephew, Juan de Grijalva, with Las Casas as adviser, and took over the command from them. It was never clear just why or how, but the soldiers suddenly ran wild and began to massacre

the Indians. Narváez joined in the chase. He helped to cut down dozens of harmless natives who had collected to admire the Spaniards' horses, asked Las Casas jeeringly what he thought of his work and was told that Satan had inspired it. The deviltry spread through all the occupied territory, and the Indians, who had lost heart after the crushing of Hatuey's people, stiffened to a last effort, with suicide as the resort of the bravest in preference to surrender.

Velasquez was furious at the excesses, but he forgave Narváez and dispatched him on a campaign westward into the unknown. The young man, sobered, performed brilliantly. He marched as far as Pinar del Rio and chose the original site of Havana on the Gulf of Batabanó. He treated the Arawáks more humanely. Those of western Cuba escaped for a while the fate suffered by their fellows in the east and in Española. For one thing, no precious metals were discovered in their territory.

By 1514, the whole island had been occupied, plantations started and gold profitably mined. The city of Santiago had been founded and had become the capital. A heavy flow of immigration was coming from Española, many of the settlers being persons who had decided to abandon the older colony, while others had passed through from Spain.

In the meantime, Ponce de León and his handful of followers had established themselves in Puerto Rico almost unopposed. The only novelty in the situation was the presence of Caribs in one district. These, too, had come as raiders. They watched the Spaniards from hiding, then in 1511 made common cause with the Arawáks and incited the latter to attempt war. One Spanish camp was taken by surprise and burned with loss of life. But Ponce de León quickly suppressed the aborigines, routing vastly superior numbers in three fights. The Caribs had been too few to make a difference. That was the end of Puerto Rican opposition. Jamaica had been an equally simple problem to Esquivel.

The growth of the administrative system and of Don Diego's viceroyal Court in Santo Domingo continued apace. In 1510 he began the construction of the grandiose palace bearing his name, where he and his successors lived and which travelers described as being fit for the reception of a European monarch. The same year a royal *audiencia*, or high court of appeal, was established, the Governor presiding by virtue of the addition of Judge to his title. The arrival of experienced jurists soon lightened his burden. Miguel de Pasamonte, a favorite of the aging King Ferdinand, was appointed treasurer. He straightened out the finances, but wielded his powers with arrogance and came to

be looked upon as more in the royal confidence than Don Diego. In 1514 a postmaster for the Indies took office.

An event of importance to the commercial future of the West Indies occurred in 1516. A variety of banana was brought by a priest from the Canary Islands and spread rapidly in every settlement. It is astonishing how many fruits and vegetables now typical of the region are of Old World origin. In addition to sugar cane and the banana, already noted, coffee, breadfruit, the date, rice, yams, akees and all kinds of citrus fruits and mangoes have been naturalized. Only the cassava, yampee, sweet potato, cocoa, pineapple, guava, papaya, avocado, naseberry and coconut are indigenous.

That same year, 1516, died Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Spain, who had survived Queen Isabella a full decade. With him there passed utterly the period of naïve and vacillating government of the newly discovered lands. His successor was his grandson Charles, first of the name in Spain, but better known in history by his subsequent title of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. As he was only sixteen, a regency was appointed, headed by Cardinal Ximenes. The latter was no friend of the Second Admiral. One of his first acts was to appoint three Jeronimite monks as superintendents of all the colonies, with emphasis on spiritual matters, but with special power over the Indians, whom they forthwith declared to be free. Their system never was really put into practice. The *repartimiento* persisted.

Chronologically, we are already somewhat ahead of the swiftly crowding details of Caribbean history. This, however, is the juncture to hazard an elucidation of Spain's treatment of the Indians. The truth is atrocious enough, without allowing a sheer enigma to stand. Spain did exterminate the Arawâks, virtually in a single generation. She did not destroy the other peoples of the Americas, or apply equally ruthless methods to them, except during the course of warfare. Indeed, the Spaniards merged with the conquered as rival colonizing races, notably the English, have never done. Many of the provinces assumed a Hispano-Indian character, the dominant class being composed of persons of mixed blood, while the peasantry remained wholly aboriginal.

The accepted theory has been repeated here. Massacres apart, the Arawâks perished because they were physically and temperamentally unsuited to the form of slavery imposed upon them. But this falls short of accounting for the wasteful frenzy with which the Spaniards used them, the violence exhibited in reversing every rare, brief attempt at a more humane regime.

Appraisal of the facts has convinced the writer that it was the very



virtues of the Arawâks that led to their being extirpated. Especially their animism with its harmless, poetical myths in place of a revealed religion. The Spaniards of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, ridden by the fanaticism that had caused the Holy Inquisition, could not understand the Arawâks and rated them as being less than human. If they had had ferocious gods from whose worship they could have been converted, had built temples which could have been torn down and the Cross substituted, all would have been well. Let the Cross be erected, said the Arawâks lightly, and honored as the *zeme* of the men from across the sea. Such amiable tolerance amounted to blasphemy.

When the expeditionaries of Cortés came to Mexico, they were impressed by the huge "mosques," as they called the Aztec temples, and pulsated with ardor to cleanse them of idols and blood sacrifices. Here was work for a Christian soldier, and fully comprehended by the vanquished who submitted to the new god. But it was impossible to convince the Arawâks that their myths had been overthrown, or to induce them to take baptism seriously. Therefore, they were brute beasts. Therefore, they should be slain or worked to death.

The Crown and the Church often had qualms about the matter. Queen Isabella once ordered that several dozen Arawâks, carefully chosen for their intelligence, should be set up in a township built for them in Cuba. They were to be supervised, but no compulsion used. If at the end of a certain time, they had shown that they were capable of living in a civilized way, they were to be recognized as free Spanish citizens and the experiment extended. By civilized the Queen meant that they must show aptitude for regular and profitable labor, as well as zeal in their religious devotions as Catholics.

Promptly reverting to the arcadianism that spelled happiness as they knew it, the probationers neither toiled nor worshiped. Many of them fled to the woods, because they found the model township too confining. The rest were returned to bondage.

For reasons like the above, the Spanish colonists ground a gentle race into the dust. Isabella could not stop it, nor the idealistic Las Casas, nor the three Jeronimite monks sent by His Eminence of Toledo, the Cardinal-Regent Cisneros de Ximenes.

## CHAPTER SIX

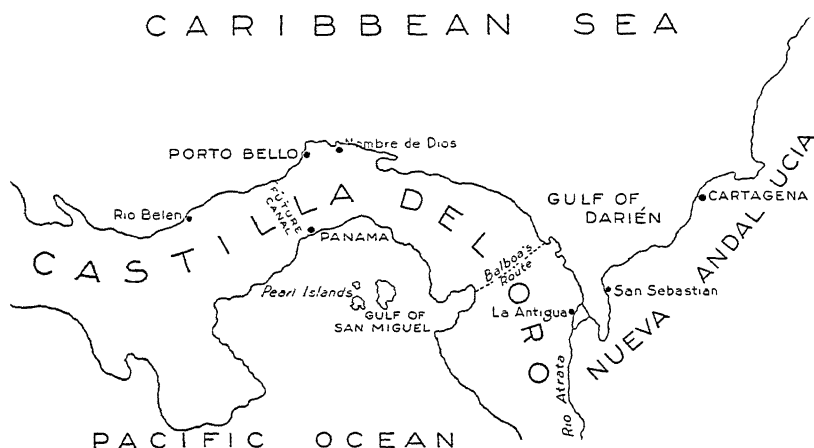
### THE GLORY AND TRAGEDY OF BALBOA

THE ambitious project of the rough adventurer, Ojeda, and the scholarly gallant, Nicuesa, to add the known mainland to the Spanish realm encountered disasters with which neither of the leaders was able to cope. Their best asset was the tenacity of their men, which triumphed in the long run—but not for Ojeda and Nicuesa. The two expeditions reached Santo Domingo at about the same time, shortly after the arrival of the Second Admiral as Governor. It was the law by then that all traffic should pass by way of Santo Domingo.

A quarrel had already started. The gamesters had been unable to agree on the line dividing their lands. Juan de la Cosa, a lieutenant of Ojeda, who had drawn some of the earliest American maps, persuaded them that it should be the Atrato River and the middle of the Gulf of Darién into which the river flowed. Ojeda took the north coast of South America and Nicuesa all of Central America as far as Cape Gracias a Dios. The former called his province Nueva Andalucía and the latter called his Castilla del Oro. Modesty was no vice of theirs. But nothing endured as they planned it, not even the names. It might have been different if one of Nicuesa's recruits had not been prevented by illness from sailing. He was Hernando Cortés.

Ojeda left Española on November 10, 1509, directing his course for the Bay of Cartagena. It was agreed that Nicuesa should follow to the same harbor, and that they would separate there. Both got away a full year before Velasquez started for Cuba. The contrast, however, between their ill success and the achievements of Velasquez was pitiable, and cannot be ascribed wholly to the sterner obstacles which faced them.

No sooner had Ojeda landed than, ignoring advice and without building a fort, he plunged straight into the wilderness with a considerable portion of his men. He attacked two villages, inhabited by a fierce tribe which used poisoned arrows. The Christians were decimated. Ojeda himself, one of the few to survive, escaped alone into the forest and straggled painfully back to the sea. He was found lying across some mangrove roots, at the point of death from hunger and exhaustion.



The Discovery of the Isthmus

He had barely recovered when Nicuesa arrived. The latter consented to join forces for vengeance on the Indians. Several horses were brought ashore to inspire terror. When the column reached the scene of battle, the natives fled at the apparition of mounted men in armor. The villages were burned, and enough gold taken from the ruins and from the bodies of the dead to make the affair profitable. The two commanders parted better friends than they had ever been.

Nicuesa sailed west and cruised along the Caribbean shore of the Isthmus interminably, finding no place where he could plant a successful colony. After some abortive attempts, he tried the Belén River, sixty-five miles west of modern Colon, but many of his people died of fevers and food was scarce. A Genoese sailor who had been with Columbus told him about Porto Bello, extolling the beauty which had caused it to be so named. Nicuesa turned back eastward and essayed to settle at the lovely port, which one day was to be the Caribbean terminus of the gold route from Panama. But as the Spaniards foraged for supplies, they were attacked from ambush and twenty of them were killed. With his force reduced to one hundred men, Nicuesa drifted on to Nombre de Dios. Here he dug himself in, erecting a rough block-house to guard the huddle of thatched cabins in which his followers sickened and starved. It was a case of utter incompetence on the part

of the would-be Governor. He sent a small brigantine with a letter to Santo Domingo, imploring aid.

His rival, Ojeda, exhibited no better judgment, but his courage was greater and he was served by some versatile fellows. Among these was a foundling named Francisco Pizarro from Trujillo, Spain. He had herded swine in his youth. Though he had not been recruited as deputy commander of the expedition, he soon came to be so regarded. Ojeda at Cartagena appeared to have a distaste for the Venezuelan coast where he had been a pearl pirate a decade earlier, and to have wished that the western province had fallen to him. At all events, he departed west as Nicuesa had done and stopped on the near shore of the Gulf of Darién, the extreme limit of his grant of territory. There he laid out a town which was to have been his capital and which he called San Sebastian.

The natives were partly Carib, which meant that they were war-like and merciless. They kept each post of Ojeda's stockade stuck fuller of arrows than the martyr Sebastian himself had been. Moving in closer as they learned the trick of making their numbers count against superior weapons, they laid regular siege to the place. On one of his sallies to drive them back, Ojeda was wounded in the thigh by a poisoned dart. He resolutely ground a red hot iron into the injured spot to cauterize it and saved his life.

A chief justice, no less, had been appointed for Ojeda's domain. He was Martin Fernández de Enciso, left behind in Santo Domingo and commissioned to follow with huge stores. Hearing nothing from him, Ojeda resolved to go after the supplies. He put Pizarro in charge of San Sebastian, with authority to abandon the site if no succor materialized in fifty days. It chanced that way, for Ojeda lost his course, was wrecked on the coast of Cuba and never again was a factor in the fortunes of his Nueva Andalucía.

Pizarro looked upon San Sebastian as a deathtrap. He waited just the fifty days specified, then embarked all his people in two vessels and set sail for Cartagena Bay, which his sure instinct told him was an excellent site for a capital. One of the ships foundered with all hands. Pizarro reached port with the other, only to be forced to yield the command to Enciso, who had just arrived from Santo Domingo.

Enciso insisted that they must return to San Sebastian and make a success of it. The illogical shuttling that marked this whole chapter of the conquest almost passes belief. Pizarro roared his protest in vain. But a new note was about to be struck, a new leader arise. In Enciso's company was the towering personality of Vasco Núñez de Balboa,

Orders were obeyed. They found San Sebastian burned to the ground and the Indians waiting for them with a cloud of poisoned arrows. Incidentally, all the stores brought by Enciso had been lost, his ship having touched the rocks at Punta Caribana and gone to pieces. The pigheaded judge became a convert to the idea that the mainland was accursed and should be abandoned.

Then Balboa stepped forward, a nobleman's son though serving as a man-at-arms, handsome as a demi-god, bearded and bold of eye. He had enlisted at the last moment in Santo Domingo to escape his creditors. He is reported to have spoken as follows:

"I remember, in years past, coming along this coast with Rodrigo de Bastidas. We entered this gulf and landed on the western shore, where we encountered a large river and saw on its opposite bank a town surrounded by fertile lands, and inhabited by people who did not poison their arrows. Let us go there."

No one stopped to recall that the farther side of the gulf was in Nicuesa's province. Heartened by Balboa's magnetism no less than by his story, the adventurers crossed the water and discovered the native community described, a far larger and more orderly one than the average. The result was the first encounter of battle proportions on the American continent. Some six hundred warriors drawn up in ranks on a hill took the Spanish charge valiantly, but were borne down by weight of steel. They would have had a chance only if they had employed poisoned arrows.

The captured town, called Darién by the Indians, was abundantly stocked with food. The Spaniards renamed it Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darién, and made it their headquarters. It shall be referred to here as La Antigua.

Several factors combined to make this a successful colony for the time being and the mother of all future expansion on the Isthmus. Gold worth 12,000 pesos had been seized from the vanquished. The people of the interior had plenty more and were willing to barter it. This was enough to arouse in the pioneers an enthusiasm that they and their fellows of Nicuesa's force had never felt at San Sebastian, Porto Bello and Nombre de Dios. The surroundings of La Antigua were comparatively agreeable, the food supply adequate. Of still greater import was the emergence of leadership in the person of Balboa.

He had promptly challenged Enciso's right to wield authority as Ojeda's lieutenant, since they were now in the territory of Nicuesa. It mattered nothing to Balboa that they had come there illegally at his own suggestion. He argued that the proper course was to organize a

new government, subject to any modifications ordered from Santo Domingo and Spain. This found favor among the colonists. They were particularly enraged with Enciso for having forbidden private trading in gold with the natives. So they deposed the judge, set up a municipality in conformity with Spanish law and elected Balboa and two others to rule it. Additional town officers were chosen later. But Balboa dominated. He had thrust aside even the waxing figure of Francisco Pizarro.

A brisk correspondence with the outer world now got under way, Santo Domingo serving as distributing center. This illustrates the remarkable advance that had been made in charting the Caribbean. The little caravels slipped confidently back and forth between key points, bringing supplies and mail, inaugurating the commerce that was soon to be so mighty.

Balboa thus learned of the plight of Nicuesa and appointed emissaries to invite him to La Antigua. The stranded bungler heard the message, amazed, then flared in wrath against what he called the invasion of his province, the plundering of gold from his Indian "subjects." He announced that he would be along to eject all the usurping officials. The upshot was sad. When he did arrive, he was refused permission even to land. His boat was chased from the harbor, and with it Diego de Nicuesa vanished forever. There is no indication of how he perished.

The survivors at Nombre de Dios were transferred shortly afterward, and temporarily there was an end of the distinction between Castilla del Oro and Nueva Andalucía. The former name was used, and Balboa was recognized as Governor, first by Diego Columbus and then by the King. The licentiate Enciso, however, departed for Spain to protest and the news trickled back that Ferdinand had become dubious about retaining the young *hidalgo* in office.

Hampered though he was by the religious prejudices and material greed of his followers, Balboa made an important contribution to Spanish policy. He was the first to defeat the Indians in battle and then win their friendship, a method which would soon prove the only possible one in subduing the continent. It was as if he had divined the existence of the civilized Aztec and Inca nations, and sought to practice his hand for the great test with them. Everything we know about him indicates that he would have been the equal of Cortés in Mexico, the superior of Pizarro in Peru.

At all events, Balboa, who had had a glimpse of the brutal extermination of the Española Arawâks, dealt with a less kindly people in a precisely opposite way. The inhabitants of Castilla del Oro were of the

stock now called San Blas, with a large admixture of Chibchan and Carib blood. They were stout fighters, and their caciques had something approaching kingly authority.

The Spaniard quelled the chief Careta's territory along the coast to the west, then made the latter an ally by marrying Careta's daughter, though not according to Christian rites. He earned at the sword's point the respect of Comagre, and from this cacique's son, Panciaco, he obtained information that beguiled him. Just beyond the low-lying mountains, Panciaco said, there was "a region where men in vessels propelled by oars and sails navigated a Great Water." No strait between the seas existed. The conception of an Isthmus dawned on Balboa. He realized that, if this were true, it explained the failure of Columbus to get through to the Orient. Here might lie the answer to the whole mystery, a key to still more worlds on the opposite shore. It would be a discovery of supreme importance, and if he were the one to make it the Crown's gratitude ought surely to be earned.

Compare the vigor of Balboa, his terse and manly prose, with the foolish mysticism, the whining and the self-pity, which Columbus too often showed. The following excerpts are from a letter addressed on January 20, 1513, by Balboa to King Ferdinand. He hinted for the first time at the existence of the Pacific Ocean, and went on:

"I have to inform your most Royal Highness that both the Governors, as well Diego de Nicuesa as Alonzo de Ojeda, performed their duties very ill, and that they were the cause of their own perdition, because they knew not how to act. They imagined they could rule the land and do all that was necessary from their beds. . . .

"I have taken care that the Indians of the land are not ill-treated, permitting no man to injure them and giving them many things from Castile, whereby they may be drawn into friendship with us. The honorable treatment of the Indians has been the cause of my learning great secrets from them. . . .

"A man gets as far as he can, not as far as he wishes. . . .

"Most puissant Lord, I desire to ask a favor of your Highness, for I have done much in your service. It is that your Highness will command that no bachelor of laws, nor of anything else, unless it be of medicine, shall come to this part of the Indies on pain of heavy punishment which your Highness shall order to be inflicted, for no bachelor [of laws] has ever come here who is not a devil, and who does not lead the life of devils. And not only are they themselves evil, but they give rise to a thousand lawsuits and quarrels. This order would be greatly to the advantage of your Highness' service, for the country is new."



VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA.

*Descubridor del Mar del Sur. Nació en  
Arenas de San Juan en el año de 1475  
y fué muerto en Lima en 1517.*





Without waiting for an answer to his pungent words, Balboa prepared an expedition to find the Pacific, chiefly in the hope of becoming too significant a man to be ousted from the governorship of Castilla del Oro. He analyzed the physical difficulties correctly, and he performed a prodigy.

He selected 181 Spaniards, all of them volunteers, and with nearly a thousand friendly Indians as bearers, he started from La Antigua on September 1, 1513, for Careta's country. There, five days later, he headed south from the point now known as Caledonia Bay. The Isthmus runs almost east and west, so the direction taken was the correct one. But as Balboa was exploring to test whether an ocean really lay beyond, it argues that he had had the most positive assurances of the shape of the Isthmus. The obvious theory would have carried him due west and bogged him in the swamps of the Chagres.

The terrain was formidable for white men afoot, many of them in armor, and loaded with the impedimenta of the sixteenth-century warrior. It was necessary to hack a path through the jungle, often against armed opposition, and if it had taken six weeks to reach the Pacific the time allowance would not have been excessive. Balboa accomplished it in three.

Marching, as he invariably did, a few paces in front of his men, he whipped up a daemonic energy in himself and in them. As the column entered the territory of Poncha, principal cacique on the Caribbean slope of the mountains, Balboa sent messengers forward and obtained guides. But the summits were controlled by another chieftain, Quareca, who knew the Spaniards only by hearsay and regarded them as fiends.

Quareca drew up a force larger than the entire expedition and barred the way. Balboa attacked headlong with his Spaniards. He routed the enemy, the bolts from his crossbows riddling the naked bodies, the swords ruinous at close quarters, until six hundred were dead, including the cacique. Then Balboa conciliated the survivors so well that he was able to obtain new guides from among them, and he sent back Poncha's men.

On the morning of September 25, the natives told him that the Great Water was visible from the nearest height. He halted the column, pressed on alone, and in the afternoon from the top of a peak in Quareca's land he saw the Pacific. At his feet was a gulf which expanded into the limitless blue. He named it the Gulf of San Miguel. The Spaniards made the descent in a few days. Balboa's first act was to wade into the water, carrying a naked sword and the Royal Standard. The-

atrically, he declared the new ocean annexed to the Crown of Spain. The commander of the second company to reach the shore was Francisco Pizarro.

The return journey to the Caribbean took three months and was attended by many hardships. Balboa, however, was resolved to know the geography of the Isthmus. In this he was fully successful.

The news of his exploit had not reached Spain when Ferdinand appointed to succeed him as Governor the sinister old man, Pedro Árias de Ávila, recalled in history by the contracted nickname of Pedrárias. The latter was over sixty. He had been a noted courtier and jousting at tournaments in his youth, had seen service against the Portuguese and Moors. His cruelty was extreme. He suffered from a chronic malady, the exact nature of which has not come down to us. It had caused him, shortly before his appointment, to be pronounced dead and placed in his coffin. But he was to live for thirty years after that, to prove the nemesis of better men than he, to become the architect of Spanish might in Panama and lower Central America. There arrived in his train the illustrious Hernando de Soto, Oviedo the historian and Juan de Quevedo, first Bishop of Castilla del Oro.

Pedrárias had been told practically to place Balboa under arrest and to conduct a merciless probe of his administration. The inquiry had scarcely commenced when Ferdinand received a report of the march to the Pacific. The document has been lost, but we have the word of contemporaries that, in verve and dignity, Balboa's narration compared favorably with the noblest classic models. The King was so impressed that he immediately prepared a commission, making Don Vasco Núñez *Adelantado Vitalico*, or Lieutenant-Governor, of the new coast and Captain of the South Sea, his territory to include the provinces of Coiba and Panama which spanned the Isthmus. He was required to enlarge his domain. The domain already was more desirable than the one left to Pedrárias, yet Balboa was to be subject to the Governor-in-Chief, just as Velasquez in Cuba remained subject to Diego Columbus.

The rest was tragedy for the greatest captain so far developed in the Indies. Pedrárias had the veto power and employed it to frustrate his rival, of whom he grew jealous to the point of mania. Bishop Quevedo patched up a truce, bizarrely sealed by a marriage ceremony between Balboa and a daughter of Pedrárias. The girl was in a convent in Spain. So her father acted as proxy for her. The purpose of the mummery was not achieved. Indeed, it did more harm than good, for mischief-mongers soon brought the morbid old Governor the story that Balboa

jeered at the alliance and had said that if it ever came down to a choice of wives he would keep his native princess. Pedrarias renewed the feud with keener malignancy than before. He also oppressed the Indians, a reversal of policy which infuriated Balboa.

A grain of truth in the gossip had made it effective. Andrés Garavito, a man-at-arms previously loyal to Balboa, had regarded the marriage by proxy as a license to attempt to seduce the comely daughter of Careta. His chief had reproached him, without rancor, saying that the Indian woman was dear to him. Garavito overnight became an enemy.

Finding himself hampered beyond endurance in the lieutenant-governorship, Balboa claimed his right under the royal mandate to explore freely. He built two small ships on the Caribbean side, performed the astonishing feat of taking them overland and used them to visit the Pearl Islands in the Gulf of Panama. These islands became his headquarters. He studied the current rumors about a vast empire to the south and drew up the first plan for a voyage in the direction of Peru. Other ships were being built and men enlisted, when Garavito accused him to Pedrarias of seeking to be an independent monarch in the lands he discovered.

Nothing could have suited the tyrant better. He ordered Don Vasco Núñez to report at the township of Aclá, the name of which meant in the native tongue, "the Bones of Men." Then he had him arrested en route by a company of soldiers under Pizarro and brought to trial with four companions for high treason. All were condemned to death. They had been condemned in advance.

Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific, was beheaded in the public square of Aclá at the age of forty-three. The date given by most authorities is 1517, but the modern Chilean scholar, J. T. Medina, has definitely established that it occurred during the first days of January, 1519.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CORTES CONQUERS MEXICO

CONTRARY to the popular impression, Mexico was not discovered by Hernando Cortés. That honor belongs to the nephew of Velasquez, the youthful Juan de Grijalva, he who had yielded the command to Pánfilo de Narváez just prior to the massacre of the Arawáks at Bayamo, Cuba. Ambitious and restless, dissatisfied with the relative tameness of his enterprise since the death of Hatuey, the Governor applied his intuition to certain legends concerning the West. There lay the golden land, the Arawáks said, exhibiting as proof an occasional ornament brought by some traveler dead and gone. There, Velasquez concluded, lay the true Hesperides, his destined reward, of which Cuba was merely the outpost. He knew fine workmanship when he saw it, knew that it betokened a civilization far in advance of anything to be found in the islands.

His feeling was confirmed when, late in 1517, Captain Hernandez de Córdova limped back from a slaving foray, mortally wounded and with half his crew dead. The Captain, driven out of his course by storms, had landed on the mysterious coast of Yucatan, less than 150 miles from Cuba, where he had found solid stone buildings and evidence that many of the handicrafts practiced were of a high order. Yucatan had been sighted in 1506, before the time of Velasquez, and forgotten. It was not Mexican, but inhabited by Mayans, who had given the white sailors a hostile reception. The reports of its wealth aroused the cupidity of all who heard them.

Velasquez fitted out an expedition of four vessels under Grijalva, with Pedro de Alvarado as one of the captains. The orders were to explore and trade. In this Grijalva had great success, rounding the peninsula, tracing the shores of flourishing kingdoms to the site of modern Vera Cruz, and bartering on terms that were like a tale from dreamland. Treasure worth nearly 20,000 pesos, writes the historian Gomara, was obtained for glass beads and other trinkets. Grijalva sent back Alvarado with most of it. Yet when the former himself returned to Cuba at the end of six months, he found his uncle incensed at him for having lacked the initiative to exceed his instructions and establish a colony. Velasquez, a hard taskmaster, had in fact, sponsored a new

and larger fleet to go in search of Grijalva and take over the exploitation of the country from him. The new commander was to be Cortés.

This is a study of the Caribbean Sea. No such work, compressed into a single volume, could attempt to give a detailed account of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. Nor would it be desirable to do so. The themes are separate, once we have established the facts that the prodigious feat of Cortés originated in the Caribbean and its success brought unimagined commerce to that sea. The writer's plan embraces the history of the West Indian islands and of the mainland littoral. It envisages only an outline of events in the near-by interior of the continents. The object is to clarify the struggle that has been waged for the control of the Caribbean, or for a foothold on it. More would be confusing. The story of the fall of Aztec Mexico, therefore, which it took Prescott half a million words to tell, will be sketched here in a few pages. The same will hold good for the conquest of Peru, and the subjugation of lesser Indian states in Central America and the northern part of South America.

Diego de Velasquez, torn between his duties as Governor of Cuba and the desire to lead the way to Mexico, chose Hernando Cortés as his deputy for mixed reasons and with some misgivings. He needed a man who was able to share the expenses of the expedition, and who had shown the qualities of a military chieftain. Cortés, like himself, had had the knack of piling up money as a landed proprietor both in Española and Cuba. Thirty-four years old, with a good fighting record, the younger man had been alternately a close confidant and an enemy of Velasquez. He had been imprisoned for scheming to go to the Second Admiral in Española with a group of malcontents and denounce the administration, had made two escapes and won a pardon for his audacity. He was even more popular with women than Velasquez, and is said to have pleased the latter by marrying the beautiful but needy Catalina Xuarez, one of whose sisters was his patron's mistress.

No one, and least of all the Governor, regarded Cortés as a trustworthy man. He did have the other necessary qualities, including a flair for glamorous leadership similar to Balboa's. So Velasquez took a chance on him, a decision which he almost immediately regretted. He feared that he had sacrificed his own chance for a place in the front rank of conquerors. That fear was amply sustained by the competence for the work in hand, the self-centered and ruthless spirit of his appointee.

Cortés assembled eleven ships in various Cuban ports. He obtained

ten brass cannon and four light pieces called falconets. For the first time on a Spanish expedition in the New World, there was a good showing of small firearms, with plentiful supplies of powder and ball. The crossbow still dominated, however, while many of the rank and file carried nothing but swords and spears. Sixteen mailclad horses, to be ridden by knights in armor, were the most costly unit and regarded as invincible against native soldiery.

Before he had fully equipped the boats under his personal supervision at Santiago, the capital, Cortés learned that Velasquez intended to replace him. He promptly weighed anchor and left by so narrow a margin that the Governor is stated to have reached the waterfront in time to see him departing, and to have shouted reproaches.

"Time presses, and there are some things that should be done before they are even thought of," bellowed Cortés in reply.

He fled to the port of Trinidad, and subsequently to Havana. Velasquez ordered the authorities at both places to arrest him, but a show of force overawed them. Recruiting went ahead until there had been enlisted some 550 soldiers and 110 sailors. More than a hundred of Grijalva's men joined. The outstanding lieutenants were Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval and Cristóbal de Olid. In the ranks was Bernal Diaz, author of the classic memoir of the conquest by an eyewitness. The total personnel was brought to nearly 900 by the addition of Arawâk servants, including a few women.

Appointing a rendezvous off Cape San Antonio, the western tip of Cuba, Cortés reviewed his ships, men and material resources with a military efficiency never exhibited by Columbus and equalled by no recent commander except Balboa. He made a fiery oration to the troops, promising them a "glorious prize," and vowing that his own efforts were motivated by "the love of that renown which is the noblest recompense of man." Then he set sail for the continent on February 18, 1519.

The landfalls were unimportant until the fleet came to the town of Tabasco up the river of the same name. Cortés seized this place, after a brisk struggle. The war-like Indians rallied an army of 40,000 on the near-by plain of Ceutla, incomparably the largest that the Spaniards had yet faced in America, armed with nothing more formidable than bows and arrows, but so well disciplined that the ranks did not break when cannon balls mowed them down. Gunpowder was sheer magic to the Tabascans. They drowned out the noise of it with battle cries and yells to their gods for aid. The cavalry, however, led by Cortés himself, proved too much for them. They supposed the mailed beasts

and their riders to be of one piece—monsters like the centaurs of Greek fable—impervious to wounds and wielding lances made of a super-naturally deadly metal. A few horses had spread terror among the woodland savages whom Ojeda and Nicuesa had attacked on the Venezuelan coast, years before. This time, a brave and organized host was thrown into utter disorder by sixteen chargers, as the knights plowed straight through the mass. It is doubtful if victory could have been had otherwise.

Cortés set at liberty two chiefs who had been captured, and amicable relations with the Tabascan people followed. Gifts were exchanged. There was a mass conversion to the Christian faith, extremely superficial in character, since the priests who accompanied the army could not make themselves understood and relied mainly on the colorful ritual of a Palm Sunday service. But the natives appeared to have found it logical that they should be asked to turn from deities who had allowed them to be humbled in battle.

Well pleased with results, Cortés re-embarked and sailed north to the islands of San Juan de Ulúa and Sacrificios, which sheltered the haven that had been the farthest point reached by Grijalva. This was the natural sea-gate of the Aztec realm, and before long envoys came down from the city of Tenochtitlán to make inquiries about the strangers. The latter were regarded with mingled fear and veneration not only because of their prowess, but because the Aztec priesthood saw in them a fulfillment of the tradition concerning the feathered one, Quetzalcoatl, god of the air. Quetzalcoatl had had a white skin and a flowing beard, a remarkable fantasy in view of the physical appearance of the Amerindian race. He had departed eastward over the ocean, promising that he would take the same route back, to inaugurate a new golden age. Had he returned in the person of one of these blond giants? The majority appear to have believed it must be so.

Cortés dealt proudly with the ambassadors, demanding a free passage to the capital. Presents were exchanged, those sent by the Emperor Montezuma being of unparalleled magnificence. The Spaniards camped ashore during the course of the negotiations, which lasted for months. The interpreters were a castaway named Aguilar and a girl slave called Marina by the whites and Malinche by the natives. Aguilar, a student for the priesthood, had been wrecked on the Yucatan coast in 1511, had spent eight years among the Mayas and learned several of their dialects. Cortés had rescued him at one of the first points he touched. Marina had been given to the conqueror as part of the tribute offered by the beaten Tabascans. She spoke both Aztec and Mayan,



which made it possible for Aguilar to deliver and receive messages through her.

One lingers over the personality of Marina with the vain desire to draw her as she was. She became the mistress of Cortés, bore a son to him, moved his emotions deeply. Because of her hold on him, she influenced the future of Mexico. It is clear that her mentality was above the average, and historians and poets have extolled her beauty. But the portrait which emerges is in no sense Indian. She is the Lady Marina, Europeanized beyond recognition, a creature of stilted phrases and conventional reactions. Those who wrote about the subjugation of the New World did not see feminine character except in the terms of the Old. They did well enough with kings and warriors. But many a wistful heroine has eluded us, really. So is it with Anacaona, the Arawák chieftainess, and that daughter of Careta whom Balboa loved.

After hesitating among the divided opinions of his counselors, Montezuma, who had ecclesiastical as well as temporal authority, sent word to the Spaniards that he could not invite them to visit him, though his attitude was friendly. Cortés protested, and the Emperor put the matter more strongly. He forbade any nearer approach to Tenochtitlán, and expressed confidence that the white men would go back to their own country as quickly as possible. Cortés had won the support of a powerful coastal cacique. There were further parleys, the delay being utilized to begin the town of Vera Cruz, north of the present location. This proof of defiance scandalized the Emperor without arousing him to the point of launching a military coup to destroy the foreigners.

Cortés at last made up his mind to one of the most daring acts in history. He burned every one of his ships as they lay at anchor, thus closing the only avenue of escape to timid or mutinous followers, and on August 16, 1519, he started for the Aztec capital with about 400 Spanish soldiers, fifteen mounted knights and seven cannon, as well as 1,300 native fighters and a large number of porters furnished by his ally. The rest of the Europeans were left to hold Vera Cruz, under Juan de Escalante.

Following the classic path that every conqueror of Mexico has taken, Cortés mounted rapidly from the *tierra caliente* into the stupendous ranges dominated by the Peak of Orizaba. He entered the free Tlascalcan republic, defeated its armies in a lightning campaign and then negotiated an alliance with this people against the Aztecs. It was his crucial victory. We cannot imagine the greater power faltering at his approach unless he had gained reinforcements that proved Indian disunion. Accompanied by 6,000 Tlascalans, he crossed the Anáhuac

plateau, was met by envoys of Montezuma and guided to the southern causeway bridging the lake of Tezcucó, from the waters of which rose fabulous Tenochtitlán at an elevation of almost 7,500 feet above sea level. Estimates of its population vary between 50,000 and 300,000.

The Emperor came out to greet Cortés on November 8 and escorted him into the city, where his troops and allies were lodged in a building near the principal temple, scene of human sacrifices on a vast scale. The terroristic methods, the mystification and the bluff which the adventurer proceeded to employ achieved a success beyond all reason. It has since been matched only by Pizarro and Clive.

Backed by a few knights in armor—symbols of irresistible force to the dazed Aztec—Cortés presently seized the person of Montezuma, held the Emperor a prisoner and compelled him to issue a declaration of allegiance to Charles, King of Spain. The wretched man served thereafter as a hostage and a mouthpiece for the domination of his subjects by the intruders. Marina, the ex-slave, stood at his elbow, translating the portentous dicta of the Spaniards, the meek replies.

As the months passed, a new difficulty confronted Cortés. His titular superior, Velasquez, learned that he was behaving in Mexico as though his direct responsibility were to the Court of Madrid, and furiously dispatched Pánfilo de Narváez to capture him, send him back a prisoner and assume command in his stead. The Narváez expedition was bungled. But there is small likelihood that any available general could have overturned a leadership that seemed one with the march of destiny.

Dividing his forces in Tenochtitlán, Cortés left Alvarado to control Montezuma, marched to the coast and routed Narváez. The latter was allowed to leave the country, but his ships and stores were confiscated, and many of his followers joined the conqueror. Alvarado, meanwhile, had wantonly butchered a company of six hundred Aztec nobles assembled for a festival and the people rose in revolt, turning upon their enslaved Emperor, demanding the lives of the strangers. Cortés hurried back. His comrades were besieged in their quarters, yet he passed through the sullen mob, untouched, and joined them. He said to Alvarado, "Your conduct has been that of a madman!" He made a last effort to play Montezuma against the mounting wrath outdoors, sending him to a balcony to deliver a harangue in favor of peace and submission.

A shower of missiles cut short the speech of the most befuddled of despots. Montezuma fell wounded by arrows and a stone. Although his injuries were not necessarily mortal, he succumbed to them. Tradition has it that he tore off his bandages and willed himself to die. The

imperial title descended to one of his brothers, and on the latter's sudden passing\* was conferred upon a nephew, Cuitahuatzin (or Guatemozin), eventually tortured and hanged by the Spaniards to end the dynasty.

With the death of Montezuma, Cortés lost his psychological hold on the Aztecs and decided to extricate himself from an impossible situation. He fought his way out of the city against opposition so bitter and bloody that the night of July 5, 1520, is known in Mexican national annals as the *Noche Triste*. At least half the Spaniards and three-fourths of the Tlascalans were killed. Every piece of artillery, every harquebus, all of the ammunition and most of the treasure had to be abandoned. The road to safety was hewn with swords. A few of the horses were saved.

Cortés took refuge in the still friendly republic of Tlascala. He spent the next ten months in organizing a new army there. Large native forces joined him. Volunteers flowed in from Española and Cuba, bringing guns and other needed supplies. In May, 1521, he launched a masterly campaign, beleaguered Tenochtitlán with a thoroughness unknown to Indian warfare, reduced it to famine and at the end of three months carried it by storm.

Rapidly, he penetrated the entire Aztec realm. This stretched from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where it joins Yucatan, the land of the Mayas, to a point just below the Tropic of Cancer and in line with the western tip of Cuba. The ruling tribe had been composed of only twenty clans, and its power had been largely due to the other peoples whom it had coerced to form a league to wage its wars and pour wealth into its gorgeous capital.

All capitulated now to Hernando Cortés. He called the country New Spain, and on October 15, 1522, his young sovereign Charles signed a commission which created him Governor, Captain-General and Chief Justice, and freed him of the shadowy overlordship of Velasquez.†

Late in 1523, Cortés sent Alvarado to subdue the lesser but by no means negligible kingdom of Guatemala in Central America, a task which he accomplished brilliantly. Olid received the assignment to take Honduras on the Caribbean side; he developed treasonable aspira-

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\* He perished of smallpox, then epidemic for the first time in Mexico. A Negro slave, brought by Narváez, had introduced the disease.

† The other outstanding event of the period, in exploration, was the circumnavigation of the globe by Fernando Magellan, a Portuguese in the service of Spain. He sailed on September 20, 1519, discovered the strait which bears his name, reached the Philippines in March, 1521, and fell in a skirmish with natives there. Only one of his vessels got back to Spain, in September, 1522.

tions, and Cortés himself marched to that conquest. Yucatan was impinged upon, but offered physical problems that gave the dying Mayan civilization a brief respite.

The decade of the 1520's saw a complicated Indian economy on the continent destroyed and superseded by Spanish feudalism, a blood-drenched religious cult replaced by Christianity, an art that would have been worth saving irretrievably lost. It saw the founding of a colony so large, so rich, and of such limitless undeveloped resources, that the islands were immediately thrown into the shade. Española and Cuba lost population, for immigrants from Europe refused to stop there and many of the early settlers joined these in the rush to Mexico. But the importance of the Caribbean Sea—the sole marine approach to Mexico—was correspondingly enhanced. The tropical products and the dribbles of treasure hitherto shipped to Europe had merely stirred the curiosity of the world. The bullion that began to stream from Vera Cruz to Cádiz, via the new mushroom port of Havana, excited an envy that warned Spain her control of the Caribbean would soon be challenged.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PIZARRO CONQUERS PERU

THE law of probabilities made it unlikely that the feat of Cortés would ever be duplicated. That in some respects it could be surpassed was beyond belief, and that the same general thrust of conquest should furnish the opportunity in barely thirteen years must have seemed chimerical. Yet Francisco Pizarro performed the miracle, with variations that rendered his southern exploit the more extraordinary and at the same time the less heroic of the two. Cortés was a born leader and a great military strategist who never departed from the logic of his course against overwhelming odds. His vision was imperial. The soul of Pizarro was that of a bandit, venturesome to the point of madness, fierce and predatory. He followed a lucky star—perhaps the luckiest in the annals of such deeds—rather than an intuition of glory.

Peru, unlike Mexico, has no geographical contact with the Caribbean Sea. The situation of the Inca kingdom was in the high Andes nearly 1,700 miles to the south. But to ignore or minimize the next conquest made by the Spaniards would be to misunderstand the essential drama where the Sea is concerned. Pizarro's adventure grew out of the work of Balboa and Pedrías on the Isthmus of Panama, and its success caused the Isthmus to displace Española as the political and commercial center of the Caribbean proper. The route to the Orient which had been so ardently sought was transformed in a moment into the gold route to Peru, and for centuries this fact kept the Caribbean dotted with the sails of galleons.

We must glance first at the events which had occurred in the province of Castilla del Oro after the execution of Balboa and during the period when Cortés was subduing Mexico.

In 1518, Pedrías commenced the building of the city of Panama on the Pacific coast, designating it as the capital in place of La Antigua. About three years later, one Gil González explored the Central American coast in a westerly direction, abandoned his leaking ships off modern Costa Rica and pressed overland to a lake on which stood a city of some pretensions. The latter was ruled by an able cacique called Nicaragua. The lake and the country in which it lies have since been known by his name. González fraternized with the people, was entertained

by the cacique. He returned to Panama and tried to get a royal commission as Governor of the region he had discovered. Pedrarias thrust him aside, sent his own man and easily annexed Nicaragua by violent means. Alvarado was then in Guatemala and Olid in Honduras.

Most of Costa Rica and the adjoining Chiriqui and Veragua sections of the Isthmus were not occupied for several years, but their primitive systems offered no problem. An occasional military foray by Pizarro and others kept them from becoming dangerous. Pedrarias, therefore, had established a common frontier with New Spain. A straight line drawn from Cape Gracias a Dios to the Pacific divided the colonies.

Francisco Pizarro had failed to rise to eminence in the service of the Governor. He had been given a tract of land and a *repartimiento* of Indians, sufficient to enable him to live as a small planter. This had been his due as a pioneer from the time of Ojeda. It does not seem that Pedrarias thought him worthy of reward, either for his desertion of Balboa or his activities as a commander against the Veragua tribes. At fifty, or thereabouts (he was illegitimate and the date of his birth uncertain), Pizarro had little credit in the world, while his principal asset was a seething energy unilluminated by genius. He assuredly could lead men, in brigand fashion. He could neither read nor write, but was capable of a rough, impressive oratory. His countenance was resolute. His tall, well-built figure was considered handsome in camps and brothels.

Familiar as he had been with Balboa's project to seek the golden southern empire of native legend, he egotistically regarded himself as heir to it, did much boasting, but postponed action on account of his poverty until a minor explorer, Andagoya, returned from a voyage beyond the Gulf of San Miguel. This man averred that Cuzco the magnificent, the Inca capital, was a reality; he had talked with nomadic merchants who had been there, and he had seen their wares. The story coincided with the first complete accounts of the triumph of Cortés. The year was 1522.

Pizarro passed at a stroke from vainglory to effort. But he was not to have the sponsored fleet, the sure landfall, the swift succession of epic climaxes which the northern victor had utilized to such dazzling ends. It would take him a decade to reach the outskirts of Cuzco. He won because he never ceased to gamble on that star of his.

The initial step was the partnership he formed with Diego de Almagro and Fernando de Luque. The former was an aging soldier of fortune, diminutive but truculent, illegitimate and unlettered, like himself; the latter a priest in charge of one of the new churches at Panama.

Luque contributed or raised most of the money needed, in return for an equal share of the profits with Pizarro, who was to command the expedition, and the lieutenant in charge of supplies and equipment, Almagro. This financial arrangement held through many vicissitudes, though the warrior's of the trio were often to be at each other's throats.

Pedr rias gave his approval to the venture, receiving a contingent share, which he afterward sold for a thousand pesos. Some two hundred men were enlisted, a single ship obtained, and Pizarro sailed in November, 1524. Almagro followed him in a still smaller vessel, with between sixty and seventy men. They got no farther than the upper reaches of the Pacific coast of Colombia, a rainy, unwholesome section, where they endured terrible hardships until forced to retreat to Panama, destitute.

Luque collected fresh funds, and in March, 1526, Pizarro and Almagro again set out with two hundred men and a few horses. They dropped below the inhospitable lands and attained the Gulf of Guayaquil in the province of Quito (now Ecuador) which had recently been conquered by the Incas. The towns were solidly constructed and the methods of agriculture were fully as advanced as those of Europe. An abundance of gold, jewelry and fine cloth testified to the wealth of the upper classes. Llamas as beasts of burden astonished the Spaniards, for nowhere else in America, not even in Mexico, had the natives possessed animals domesticated for this purpose.

Several armed clashes occurred. Then, with only thirteen companions, Pizarro pressed on to the luxurious city of Tumbes near the mouth of the Guayas River, exchanged gifts and courtesies with its friendly inhabitants and met an Inca noble. He cruised south another four hundred miles, landing at many points in Peru. But his forces had been so depleted in battle and by disease, his armament was so deficient, that he realized it would be impossible to attempt a conquest. At the ninth degree of latitude, south, he turned back. His second reappearance at Panama, in 1528, was not quite the anticlimax that the first had been, because he brought considerable treasure and various novelties, including live llamas.

Don Pedro de Rios had succeeded Pedr rias as Governor, and Luque, representing the partnership, applied to him for backing in a third expedition to be conducted on a grand scale. Rios answered, according to the historian, Herrera, that he "had no idea of depopulating his own state in order to build up new countries, or of sacrificing more lives than had already been thrown away, merely because men had become excited by the display of gold, silver and Indian sheep." Few among

the early rulers of the Indies would have resisted the lure. They were generally gamblers. By scornfully dismissing the most splendid chance afforded any of them, Pedro de Rios earned a booby's niche in history.

For the fruit was ripe and almost ready to fall. The partners decided to appeal directly to the Crown for aid, and Pizarro was empowered to represent the others. He left for Spain, accompanied by one of the knights who had fought under him, several Peruvian servants and llamas. The precious vases of Inca workmanship he carried delighted King Charles, who was about to leave for Italy to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor. A hearty commendation to the Council of the Indies, backed by the assistance of the Queen, obtained for Pizarro the monopoly of conquest and discovery in Peru, with the governorship and other major offices for life. He would have the right to assign lands and Indians to colonists. Almagro was to be military chief at Tumbez and Luque its Bishop, the stories regarding this city having caused its comparative importance to be much overrated.

The only obligation placed on Pizarro was that he must raise and equip an expeditionary force of 250 men, of whom a hundred might be drawn from the colonies, and that he must launch the affair within six months of his return to Panama. The terms were the most favorable that had been granted, sight unseen, to any adventurer since Columbus. Almagro, naturally enough, found them disadvantageous and hurtful to his pride. He was soothed with difficulty and thereafter he looked for an opportunity to get even.

Fantastically, the cachet of royal approval enabled Pizarro to get credit for the finest equipment he had ever had, but not to recruit his full complement of men. His reputation was that of a reckless commander who led his soldiers into deathtraps. Two of his brothers, Hernando and Gonzalo, followed him from Spain. The talented captains, Sebastian de Benalcázar and Hernando de Soto, joined him. But when his three ships at last set sail from Panama, in January, 1531, his total force mustered only 180, with mounts for thirty, harquebuses for many more, and two falconets. Almagro stayed behind, on the understanding that he would enlist re-enforcements and hurry to his support.

Memories of Tumbez, so genial, rich and fit for plunder, urged Pizarro to go straight there, but difficulties with the weather caused him to land considerably to the north. He fell upon a smaller town, looted it thoroughly and got more emeralds than he knew existed, in addition to gold and silver. He at once sent his ships and most of his treasure to Panama, to encourage Luque and stimulate recruiting. Then



he marched down the coast, spreading rapine. Little resistance was offered, but he made slow progress on account of the rough terrain.

By the time he was in a position to strike at Tumbez, he had been strengthened by nearly 150 soldiers arriving from the north. To his bewilderment, the Tumbez he had known was no more. He entered a deserted and partly demolished city, in which no battle had raged, but which had been voluntarily ruined by its inhabitants. Their act has never been clarified, though it probably had less to do with the coming of the Spaniards than with the recent chaos in the Inca state.

The name Inca was applied equally to the ruling caste of ancient Peru and to the monarch himself. It simply means king or lord, but convention presumed that all members of the nobility were blood relations of the monarch. They belonged to a sacred race and so were little kings, while he was the supreme king. The peasantry were of various closely allied breeds. In books for the general reader, Inca is often used to describe the whole Peruvian people, and this shall be the rule followed here. The head of the state will be referred to as the Emperor.

Pizarro learned from prisoners taken near Tumbez that there had been a civil war, resulting eight months before in the overthrow of the Emperor Huasca by his brother, Atahualpa. The country was still shaken, and in many quarters the decision had not really been accepted. It was thought preferable to renew the struggle than to endure the dreadful reprisals of Atahualpa.

Cortés had conquered Mexico, as Pizarro knew, with the help of native princes whose reason for co-operating with him had been their hatred of the Aztecs. The former swineherd was overjoyed, therefore, to find that there was disunion in Peru, also. He might well have been. This was the factor that gave him a forlorn hope of victory over a greater realm than that of the Aztecs. It had not existed when he made his earlier voyages.

A little to the south of Tumbez, he built a township which he called San Miguel. He appointed officials, garrisoned the fort and then plunged into the heart of the civilized Inca country with 177 men, of whom sixty-seven were cavalry. Noting that a few were disaffected, he winnowed them out, permitting nine to rejoin the San Miguel settlers and pressing on with a tested residue of 168 daredevils.

It was the adventure of a bravo from another world capitalizing on the wonder he aroused, not a military campaign. At each new city, Pizarro was entertained lavishly, while a numerous soldiery escorted him along the roads, or gathered to appraise his marvelous horses, his steel arms and armor. Like the Aztecs, the Incas were ignorant of the

uses of iron, but had discovered how to harden copper with a modicum of tin. Their spears were formidable weapons. Pizarro knew better than to attempt robbery in a thickly populated and well-guarded society, and for months his conduct was faultless.

The Emperor was at Cajamarca in a distant valley of the cordilleras. His headquarters became the objective of the Spaniards, who advanced boldly, climbing snow-capped ranges and cutting themselves off from the possibility of regaining the coast in the event of disaster. Presently, Atahualpa sent an envoy to them with greetings, gifts and an invitation to visit him. They were thunderstruck to find how vast an army surrounded him. A public building of Cajamarca was assigned to them as a barracks, creating a situation similar to the one caused by the installation of Cortés and his followers in Tenochtitlán.

With unique audacity, Pizarro asked the privilege of entertaining the Emperor first, and Atahualpa came to the great square of the town, escorted ceremonially by courtiers and unarmed troops. The Spaniards in a flash assaulted him, dragged him from his litter and cast him behind them into a chamber of their quarters, butchered his helpless companions by hundreds—some authorities say thousands—and then stood firm, defying the lightning of vengeance. It was the seizure of Montezuma over again, in circumstances of wilder melodrama and with more immediate, more comprehensive rewards.

The Incas regarded their Emperor as being, by virtue of his birth and office, a demigod. The violation of his person stunned them, and his detention in chains deprived them temporarily even of the will to vengeance. Atahualpa, however, exhibited a certain realism. He tried to ransom himself by sending for enough golden vessels and ore to fill a large room. Hearing that his deposed brother, Huasca, was seeking Spanish aid to regain the throne, he smuggled out orders to have him murdered. These things availed him nothing. When Pizarro felt that Atahualpa's value as a symbol and hostage was commencing to wane, he tried him on a trumped-up charge and put him to death by strangling.

The subsequent conquest of Peru may be explained in broad terms. Spanish volunteers, fired by the news of treasure, began to reach Pizarro from Panama before he left Cajamarca and continued to arrive, a small but steady stream that discouraged the Incas. The latter were confused by their own political dissensions and failed to rally behind a new Emperor until it was too late. When sanguinary fighting did break out, the Spaniards had sufficient numbers and weight of weapons to overcome a primitive host.

In November, 1533, Pizarro made a triumphal entry into the city of

Cuzco. Fourteen months later, he founded Lima, destined to become the splendid capital of the Spanish viceroyalty. He dispatched Benalcázar north to conquer the province of Quito, and by 1535 this had been fully accomplished with the support of natives who had detested the regime of Atahualpa. Another expedition subjugated the Charcas Indians of the lofty plateau about Lake Titicaca, the core of modern Bolivia.

The suicidal jealousies that flamed up among the leaders need not concern us. It will suffice to mention that an abortive revolt by Almagro ended with his execution in 1538, while the architect of the conquest, the illustrious Francisco Pizarro, was assassinated in 1541 by friends of his late partner's son. There had been blood on the moon when those two foundlings were born.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE SPANISH MAIN

WITH the conquests of Mexico and Peru behind us, we return to the Caribbean and shall not deviate so far again. Three long links of the ramparts of the inland sea remained to be occupied after Cortés and Pedrarias had pre-empted the western littoral from the Tropic of Cancer to Darién. These were the shore of North America bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, the Lesser Antilles and the mainland of South America which is shared today by the republics of Colombia and Venezuela.

Florida, as the entire north was called, had not been ignored, but the results had been tragic. Tiring of Puerto Rico, Ponce de León in 1513 had sought the "Fountain of Youth" on the peninsula, where he was mortally wounded by Indians. He furnished geographical information which caused Pánfilo de Narváez to try to redeem himself for his fiasco against Cortés. In 1527, Narváez led a promising naval expedition from Tampa Bay to Pensacola Bay. He was drowned at the latter point, and there ensued the odyssey of Cabeza de Vaca, who with three other stragglers of his company crossed the continent afoot to the Gulf of California.

The grandiose attempt of Hernando de Soto followed. Appointed Governor of Cuba in 1538, Soto spent his private fortune, gained with Pizarro in Peru, in outfitting a force of more than a thousand men to conquer Florida. He sailed from Havana on May 12, 1539. Many of his soldiers came drifting back, disgusted by hardships that had produced no gold. But Soto pressed on, lost contact with his base and vanished. Four years later, about three hundred survivors reached Mexico City from a northerly direction. They reported that they had left their commander's body sunk in the waters of the Mississippi, which he had discovered in 1541. It is said that his coffin had been made of melted bullets, a dubious story when we recall how precious ammunition was to Spanish adventurers.

The Spaniards claimed the arc of small islands from the Virgins to Trinidad, but they had by no means visited all of them. They had been negligent about planting colonists and rearing defenses to establish a

hold on a section that was bound to become of the utmost strategical importance in fighting off intruders. They continued to let the matter slide, which explains why the English, French and Dutch afterward found it so easy to force their way into the Caribbean.

But they were eager from the beginning to settle the South American mainland, where they correctly assumed that the mining possibilities were very great. The grant to Ojeda of "Nueva Andalucía," in 1508, had been an attempt in this direction; its failure led to a number of minor experiments. But it took a quarter of a century more for the Spaniards to do anything of moment on a coast that was perfectly accessible. When they at last acted, they made it so peculiarly their own that foreigners called it "The Spanish Main" to distinguish it from other coasts which, although under the Spanish flag, appeared somehow less Spanish.

There has been much controversy about this term. Many authorities, among them the erudite modern, Philip Ainsworth Means, expand it to take in the adjacent lands and waters. Popular literature, for the most part, applies it to the Antilles and Central America. But the older designation is the sound one. The Spanish Main is the coast from the Isthmus of Panama eastward to the mouth of the Gulf of Paria, opposite Trinidad. Its length, as the crow flies, is 1,250 miles.

A range of lofty mountains linked with the Andes stands back at no great distance from the sea. The narrow belt along the shore affords as obvious footholds the good harbor of Cartagena, the mouth of the Magdalena River and the Gulf of Maracaibo connecting with the huge lagoon of the same name. Only the Magdalena, which runs north and south, is an easy route to the interior. Maracaibo Lagoon is a deception, for it terminates in morasses at the foot of steeply rising crags.

Pizarro, in 1510, momentarily the successor of Ojeda, had fancied the Cartagena site. He had been overruled, and no town was actually built in the region until 1520 when Cumaná, a port of small significance, became headquarters for the pearl fishers of Margarita and Cubagua Islands, far to the east. Five years later, Santa Marta, the oldest Spanish city in South America, was founded near the mouth of the Magdalena. It developed slowly as a trading center.

The next step was of the greatest interest, and although mentioned in every worth-while history has not been treated with the fullness it deserves. Venezuela, as Means puts it, was remarkable among Caribbean countries because "it was opened up to European influences largely by Germans rather than by Spaniards. In this we see a result of the multiplicity of crowns worn by the Spanish monarch who, besides

being Charles I of Castile, was also Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. At Augsburg, in his German dominions, there was the rich and powerful banking house of the Welsers to whom the Emperor was under rather uncomfortable monetary obligations. Having advanced to Charles large sums of money wherewith he convinced certain electors that he would be an excellent Emperor, the Welsers not unnaturally looked to the successful candidate for a substantial token of his regard for them. Thus it came about that, in 1528, Charles made the Welsers perpetual lords proprietors of Venezuela and awarded them a grant which, it was expected, would bring the Augsburgers heavy profits from gold, slaves, and whatever other commodities might be found."

From other sources it would appear that a few German and Flemish traders were allowed to operate among the Spaniards at Cumaná, with the right to go afield, if they wished, "to discover and civilize." These individuals transferred their permit to the Welsers for a price, and the bankers got Charles to ratify the transaction with enlarged powers.

The Welsers lost no time in sending out three hundred German colonists, under Ambrose Alfinger as Governor. A settlement was located in February, 1529, at Coro, a little east of the entrance to Maracaibo Lagoon, but Alfinger's passion was for treasure-hunting conducted with savage cruelty to the natives. He and his lieutenants penetrated the mountains in several directions. They employed scores of Indian porters, chained together. Around his neck each slave had a ring which was riveted to the chain. "When one of the slaves was too ill, or too exhausted, to proceed any farther," writes a historian, "Alfinger had the unfortunate wretch's head severed from his body, so that the body dropped away from the chain without the march being hindered."

Some service was rendered to the cause of exploration. A faint German tinge spread through that end of Venezuela, as shown by occasional place and family names. But the colony did not prove a success, and the Welser privileges were revoked in 1556.

In 1532, Don Antonio de Sedeño took possession of Trinidad, which the Spaniards found unattractive for a double reason. War-like Caribs resisted them, and there was no gold to compensate. They held the island weakly for longer than two centuries.

The dynamic advance on the Main eventually was made by Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, a man of varied gifts. He had been a lawyer in his birthplace, Granada, Spain. Cultured and reasonably humane, he nevertheless had an instinct for leading rough adventurers. He was not too greedy for riches, and probably cared more about the pure thrill of establishing contact with an exotic civilization than any of his rivals.

By and large, the Chibcha peoples were extremely lucky in their conquistador.

Stories about this race, mostly fables, were plentiful on the coast. Their highland cities outdid the splendors of the Aztecs and Incas, according to rumor. Their princes went abroad weighted down with gold and glittering with emeralds. Already the tenacious myth of El Dorado had begun to shape itself. The Magdalena River was the avenue to the last and greatest treasure house.

Jiménez de Quesada was the choice of the Spanish capitalist, Don Pedro Fernández de Lugo, who had a "discoverer's contract" with the Crown, of which the first reward had been the post of Adelantado of Santa Marta. The negotiations came to a head in 1535. Cartagena de las Indias had been founded west of the Magdalena two years before by Pedro de Heredia, but Santa Marta, east of and closer to the outlet of the river, was still the more important city. The plan called for mounting the stream in five light-draft ships of sturdy construction. The force of about two hundred was well armed, and nearly a third of the men were mounted.

Starting from Santa Marta in April, 1536, Quesada soon found it preferable to disembark and march overland to the headwaters of the upper Magdalena, where the vessels unloaded their supplies. The chief perils until then had been poisoned arrows shot from ambush by primitive Indians, the bites of a multitude of insects, and the tropical diseases with which Europeans were utterly unable to cope, much less understand. They drank the foulest water without dreaming that typhoid fever could be contracted thereby, and believed that malaria was inhaled from the miasmas of swamps.

After they turned their backs on the ships and started to climb the sierras, their health improved. They came to verdant tablelands and valleys which reminded Quesada of his native province and inspired the name he afterward chose for the conquered province, the "New Kingdom" of Granada. Simultaneously, they encountered the first Chibcha warriors, but the resistance that these offered was puerile. Only one battle of major proportions took place, and as Quesada had more fire-arms and far more mailed men on mailed horses than either Cortés or Pizarro commanded, he decimated his foes with ease. The factor of local dissension was again present, to assist him. The Chibchan *zipa*, or supreme cacique, had lately established a hegemony which crumbled in the face of defeat.

Thus Quesada entered the plateau of Bacatá (in Spanish, Bogotá) with his surviving 166 men and 59 horses and seized the *zipa's* capital

of the same name, virtually unopposed. He took Sogamoso and Tunja, seat of the *zipa's* principal competitor. Gold, emeralds and fine textiles were obtained, though not in the vast quantities that had made Tenochtitlán and Cuzco the wonders of the world.

By the end of January, 1538, the conquest of the territory was complete, and on August 6 of that year he founded the city of Santa Fé de Bogotá, utilizing the native site. This had scarcely been accomplished when Sebastian de Benalcázar, coming from Quito, and Nicholas Federmann, a German, lieutenant of the Welser tyrant, Alfinger, were reported to be converging on the plateau. Quesada handled them with shrewd diplomacy. He sent messengers to guide them to a rendezvous, then went himself to join them and play the host. The three rode into Bogotá side by side. True, a bitter quarrel developed over the boundaries of their respective holdings. Quesada had the psychological advantage. He forced the retreat of Benalcázar and Federmann, while seducing many of their followers into remaining with him. In time the colony, as won and charted by him, was confirmed by the Crown, but he never obtained the appointment as civil Governor.

The mild policies of Quesada, especially his avoidance of torture, kept the Chibchan population intact and favored the spread of Spanish customs. These people took readily to Christianity. The Church grew powerful in Nueva Granada, as it was called, with a speed unmatched elsewhere around the Caribbean. Missionary activities were followed by those anchors of ecclesiasticism, the monastery and the convent, to such an extent that the Main's earliest reputation was one of somber piety.

It never wanted for adventurers, however, because of the lure of El Dorado. Far from unraveling the mystery, Quesada's conquest had simply given it the first of its innumerable forms. The Chibcha kingdom had not lived up to its fame in the matter of wealth. But the Spaniards heard at Bogotá of a mysterious lake, the bottom of which was paved with gold and gems. The precious objects were thrown there once a year as part of a religious ceremony. Furthermore, the monarch of the region covered his body with powdered gold on a gummy base and appeared naked before the people as a gilded man. He was carried to the lake, where he plunged into the water and washed the gold from his person.

The above was true, though exaggerated. The cacique of a small Chibcha tribe which lived on the shores of Lake Guatavita did go through the ritual, as his ancestors had done. The value of the gold dust on his body, of course, was negligible, and there is no reason to



think that objects of much value were sacrificed in the water. But the location of Lake Guatavita eluded the Spanish pioneers, and the more they heard about it the more the story grew in their imaginations.

They considered that at Bogotá they were only on the threshold of the magic land. They argued that if any people were able to toss away fortunes in a ceremony, the treasure at the bottom of the lake would be the least of it. The country roundabout must be the wealthiest on earth. They called it the place of El Dorado (The Gilded Man). The two words last mentioned have been adopted and misused in English as well as most other modern languages. El Dorado has been taken to be the name of a land, whereas it is the description of a person.

Jiménez de Quesada himself clung to the obsession fanatically. He lived to a great age and, chiefly through wise landholding, he became one of the richest men in the New World. This enabled him to finance and lead expeditions to discover El Dorado, and his will provided for the perpetuation of his illusion. We shall hear of this again.

Commercial traffic between the north coast of South America and points beyond the mountains, except Bogotá, took a long time to develop. But the seaboard of the Main was in itself a colony that interested Spain and Española. It became linked in a roundabout manner with the Peruvian bonanza, through the new ports of Nombre de Dios and Porto Bello which sprang up on the Caribbean side of the Isthmus to handle the goods brought by pack train from the city of Panama. The treasure ships—and the slave ships—no longer necessarily stopped at Santo Domingo, going and coming. Many of them adopted Cartagena instead, as a way station. This balanced the role of Havana on the northern route between Seville and Vera Cruz, and gave the Spanish Main a significance at least equal to that of Cuba in the general scheme.

## CHAPTER TEN

### AT THE END OF FIFTY YEARS

It is now possible to look objectively at a Middle America conquered, annexed and colonized at advantageous points by Spain. This condition had become a reality in the year 1542, just half a century after the arrival of Columbus. The reader is asked to take a map of the Caribbean and note from what follows how definitely that sea was the theater of the effort that had brought an empire into being, the medium of swift expansion and the agency for holding together such far-flung possessions. It was as necessary for the Spaniards to keep the Caribbean *their* sea as it had been for the Romans to hold the Mediterranean.

An outline map tinted to indicate the degree of Spanish control would depict the island of Española in a dark, even shade. The same color would appear on the broad eastern end of Cuba, run through the center of the country with a tendency toward the south coast and enlarge to a considerable patch about Havana. Jamaica and Puerto Rico would be lightly shaded, to show an incomplete colonization, with Trinidad still more faintly tinged. The islets of the Lesser Antilles and the Bahamas would remain white, being virtually uninvaded by the Spaniards in 1542. Florida and the Gulf Coast of North America also would be white. On the continent, there would be a dark area in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, connecting with the valley of Mexico, from which spurs would extend for one hundred miles or so in all directions. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec would be tinted and the western coast of Yucatan, particularly where Mérida is located. A splash of color would mark the central plateau of Guatemala, with smaller stains in the northeast of Honduras and the environs of Lake Nicaragua. Panama would show up as the most positive spot, after Española and the valley of Mexico. There would be a band across the narrowest part of the Isthmus, perhaps two hundred miles from east to west. On the Spanish Main, the color would be deep from Cartagena to Santa Marta, embracing the mouth of the Magdalena River and attached by a thread to far Bogotá. The streak eastward along the Main would grow fainter and fainter, except for the pearl fisheries served by Cumaná, until it reached Trinidad.

The founding of the chief cities has been mentioned as the narrative



Spanish Colonization at the End of Fifty Years

progressed. A survey at this point of capitals and maritime centers in 1542 will be helpful. The intent is to show which ports were vital to the system and, without going into too much detail, to give an idea of what colonial activities flourished in them.

Only by courtesy could they be called cities. There did not exist in the region a Spanish town with as many as five thousand inhabitants. Some of them counted their population in the hundreds. Yet they were organized as municipalities on the assumption of their future growth, and were given resounding titles by the sovereign. The plan of construction was simple and uniform, for Spanish laws set forth minute specifications about the way a town must be laid out. The central point invariably was a square plaza. Around the latter were built the principal church, the *casa de ayuntamiento*, or town hall, the prison and sometimes the Governor's residence. A military barracks facing a *plaza de armas* or parade ground was generally located near by. The chess-board pattern of streets intersecting at right angles was adopted unless the nature of the ground rendered it inconvenient. Spanish-American cities, therefore, tended to be square or to grow on two sides until they acquired an oblong shape. The circular formation so often seen in Europe was rare.

Santo Domingo, first settlement of white men in the New World to

survive, enlarged steadily but slowly after it had been moved from the east to the west bank of the Ozama River by Ovando in 1502. The site was not good, for the estuary of a small and shallow stream constituted the harbor, while the city was without natural defenses along the ocean front. But the most was made of it. Following the earliest period, the houses were built of stone. The cathedral, dating from 1512, was of fine workmanship; the castle and Governor's palace as ambitious as anything constructed by the Spaniards in America for a hundred years. A college dedicated to Saint Thomas of Aquinas antedated all other seats of learning in the New World. Miguel Pasamonte, Treasurer in the time of the Second Admiral, founded a hospital, and there were three populous monasteries by 1542. The rudimentary *audiencia* which had begun to function under Diego Columbus in 1510 was given definite form by a royal order of September 14, 1526. It was composed of a President, four *oidores* or judges, and a court attorney. It had jurisdiction over both civil and criminal cases. Operating as a supreme court for the Greater Antilles and the Spanish Main, it enormously enhanced the prestige of Santo Domingo.

The peculiar institution of the *audiencia*, which was soon extended throughout the colonies, should be clarified, for the term will often have to be used. The President was a layman, the ranking official at the scene of a court session acting in this capacity whether he were Viceroy, Captain-General, or provincial Governor. The *oidores* were professional jurists. "In Spanish America," writes William Spence Robertson, the historian, "the *audiencia* developed important administrative functions. When the Viceroy was absent or disabled, the senior *oidor* or, in special cases, the entire tribunal assumed the executive authority. Gradually the Spanish-American *audiencias* became advisory councils to the chief executives. They shared with the Viceroys or Captains-General of their respective districts the responsibility for the management of military affairs. They likewise exercised authority in ecclesiastical affairs, especially in matters of patronage and finance. As they heard complaints from persons who considered themselves injured by the acts of Viceroys or Governors, they consequently restricted the powers of such magistrates."

The *audiencia* was in its infancy at the close of the first half-century. That its birthplace was Santo Domingo has always been a source of pride to that city.

San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Santiago-de-Cuba dispute the title of being the next oldest capital in the Spanish dominions. Authorities agree that the founders are not always reliable as to dates, the tempta-

tion having been to assert that they acted ahead of some rival. Recent research awards the precedence to San Juan.

When Ponce de León began the exploration of Puerto Rico in 1508, he was charmed by the harbor on the north coast and described it as the "rich port." It was protected by an islet with a steep bluff at one end, overlooking the channel, and a narrow strait at the other which could readily be blocked. The main shore was safer from enemies approaching by way of the sea, so he placed a settlement there, known as Caparra. It proved unhealthy, and early in 1511 it was moved to a site under the bluff at the entrance. The town received the name of the islet, becoming San Juan del Puerto Rico. By a quirk of nomenclature, the harbor presently was that of San Juan, while the greater island of which it was a part was called Puerto Rico. Destiny had reserved a quiet role for this colony. More than any other in the West Indies, it was the one to which sober Spanish immigrants came and settled permanently, instead of rushing on to the lands of blood and gold. Growth of this kind is leisurely. San Juan in 1542 was a mere village, though it was one day to be a walled city with moats, drawbridges and a formidable castle.

Diego de Velasquez, as has been related, marched to the conquest of Cuba from the northeast coast, where his original camp had been pitched on the site of Baracoa and a fort built. He designated this place as the capital, but realized its shortcomings. The discovery on an unknown date of the remarkable bottleneck harbor on the south shore solved his problem, and he planned the construction of a town there. Military difficulties and the need of obtaining the approval of his superior in Santo Domingo prevented him from founding it and transferring the seat of government until late in 1514. He called it Santiago in honor of the patron saint of Spain.

In one respect, Santiago indubitably ranks next to Santo Domingo. The second oldest cathedral church in the New World was built of wattle and mud by Velasquez a short distance back from the waterfront, on a slope reclaimed from the glistening palms and flower-laden underbrush. The episcopal crozier was swift in following the sword, for in 1522, when Santiago received its armorial bearings and title of a city of the second class, a bishop was appointed with jurisdiction over all Cuba. Velasquez died two years later, and was buried by the altar steps. He had left 2,000 ducats, to be added to the sum contributed by the Crown for a finer structure, the second of four to be erected on the site.

Santiago in 1542 was the port for communication with Española and

Jamaica. It had mothered the expedition of Cortés, but the golden torrent from Mexico never flowed that way.

Havana had been the beneficiary, a brand-new Havana just transferred from the bay of Batabanó on the south coast where Pánfilo de Narváez had picked a location in 1514. The iridescent beauty of the water was not enough; it was too shallow at Batabanó, where all the way across to the Isle of Pines one can see coral gardens a few yards below the surface. Some ships belonging to Velasquez found the splendid north-coast inlet in 1517, where they beached for repairs. On the strength of their report, the Governor moved the town and the traffic created by Cortés enriched it.

The chalky non-absorbent soil caused surface filth to accumulate, to the detriment of health. But the maritime advantages gave Havana a growth that was never halted. The first serious estimate of the population showed three thousand inhabitants in 1600, and it is unlikely that there were a thousand in 1542. La Fuerza, oldest Spanish fortress intact and inhabited in this hemisphere, dates from 1537. The relatively sumptuous quarters of its commander, beneath the watchtower and ringed by the forbidding cannon, became the residence of a long line of Cuba's Governors, beginning with Hernando de Soto.

Though the Spaniards had entered Mexico at the ideal spot for their port of Vera Cruz, behind San Juan de Ulúa and Sacrificios, they built elsewhere and moved twice before they came back to the "pocket full of holes," as the harbor is called on account of the many channels by which it may be reached. In 1542 they were using a roadstead to the north, where labor, for the most part transient, handled the bullion and the supplies from Spain on a roaring foreshore.

Panama, founded in 1518 by Pedrías, already had an *audiencia*, marking its position as second to Santo Domingo in name, but first in fact, at the end of the marvelous fifty years. Its defenses were weak, since no enemy was then feared on the Pacific. It had a cathedral, a royal warehouse and a few stone residences. The population, including slaves, may have been two thousand. But as early as 1530 a broad, paved road ran north to Venta Cruces in the middle of the Isthmus, forked there and—still broad, though not paved throughout—continued to Porto Bello and Nombre de Dios. That was the glory of the administration. That was the Gold Road. It lay a full 150 miles west of the trail broken by Balboa for the discovery of the Pacific.

After two false attempts on the north coast of Jamaica, the Spaniards reared in 1534 a capital on the southern alluvial plain, thirteen miles from the sea. It was one of the countless places they dedicated to Santi-

ago, but they called it the Villa de la Vega, corrupted by the English to St. Jago de la Vega. A dusty, sun-stricken spot, they never tried to give it grandeur. Its foreign commerce flowed through Cagua or the Pasaje (Passage) at the near end of Kingston Harbor, a magnificent body of water which the Spaniards neglected otherwise.

The recent founding of Cartagena has already been mentioned. In 1542, practically on the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Columbus, Francisco de Montejo the Younger succeeded in breaking the resistance of the Mayas of Yucatan and beginning the city of Mérida on the site of the aboriginal Thó. He took the stones of pyramids demolished by him to construct a mansion, a fort and a Franciscan convent.

Many guesses have been made at the number of white men then living in the Caribbean region. They are guesses and nothing more. Fifteen thousand, including women and children, is as good as the next one. No proper records were kept at the points of departure and arrival. Some passenger lists of ships, the average number of vessels sailing per year, and the fragmentary tax reports which have been exhumed from the Archives of the Indies, are all we have to go by. Negro slaves were becoming numerous in the Greater Antilles, for the Arawâks had vanished like smoke along the hills. On the mainland, no appreciable lessening of the Indians had occurred.

Española was still the best settled colony, though it was losing its pioneers steadily to Cuba, Mexico and Panama. About this time, its name began to be modified in most languages to Hispaniola, which has long been official for the island as distinguished from the two states comprised, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. It will be called Hispaniola in the succeeding parts of this work. The aboriginal name had been Quisqueya.

Another Arawâk name suppressed by the Spaniards was Borinquén, meaning Land of the Valiant Lord. It was changed to Puerto Rico. But all efforts to get rid of Cuba and Jamaica failed. The larger island was first called Juana, then Fernandina, in honor of royal persons. Cuba persisted. Santiago as the appellation of Jamaica was one use too many of that pious battlecry, and even the conquerors seemed to prefer the soft native Xaymaca, to give the original spelling. It means Land of Woods and Streams. Trinidad, in the Carib tongue, was Iere, signifying Land of the Humming Bird.

## Part Two

### SPLENDOR AND CHALLENGE

*To trust also to the doubtfulness of battle is but a fearsome and uncertain adventure, seeing wherein fortune is as likely to prevail as virtue.*

—SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### THE FIRST TRESPASSERS

NOTHING has been said, so far, about interference with Spanish control in the Caribbean by pirates, smugglers, and the agents of foreign governments moved to a pardonable curiosity as to the nature of the bonanza. There had been such interference on a small scale since 1527. But it seemed preferable to trace the outlines of the conquest unmarred by portents, which can now be reviewed in connection with a later period when their significance had become clear. At the beginning of the second fifty years, Spain was about to be seriously challenged by European trespassers. The story of the rest of the Sixteenth and all the Seventeenth Century is largely the story of that rivalry.

It is important to remember two things:

The Pope's division of the New World between Spain and Portugal, by means of his four bulls and the Treaty of Tordesillas, had been accepted as final by those countries and by the disinterested, but by no others.

The Spanish acquisitions had been treated from the start as the private estate of the Crown; they could neither buy nor sell in any market but Spain, and foreigners were forbidden to visit them, much less to trade there.

As Portugal never appeared in the Caribbean, the first point is confined for our purposes to Spain's struggle to maintain her position there against the seafaring nations of northern Europe: England, France, Holland and, trivially, Denmark and Sweden.

The second matter—the policy of a closed economy and commerce—



was the curse of European domination of the New World until the colonies cut loose from their exploiters. Inaugurated by Spain and practiced by her with the extreme of purblind selfishness, it was copied by the more powerful newcomers, especially England. Yet the initial meddling with Spain, apart from piracy, was designed to break down the system, to establish free trade, and it was welcomed by a considerable element among the colonists.

The chronology fixed by C. H. Haring, P. A. Means and Irene A. Wright is the best guide to a subject that earlier authorship dismissed carelessly. The writer gratefully acknowledges his debt to them for much that this chapter contains.

An English captain named John Rut was apparently the first man to visit a Spanish Caribbean port in an alien ship. He had sailed with two vessels in 1527, under orders from Henry VIII to cruise to the Orient by a westward course and to inspect the new Spanish possessions en route. Late in November a craft answering the general description of both of his, arrived in Santo Domingo harbor, to the amazement of the populace. The name of the commander is not given in the reports sent to Spain, but he is quoted in terms which point to his having been John Rut. Attempting to find a strait north of Labrador, he said, he had lost one of his ships and had suffered great hardships.

The Governor regarded him as a voyager in distress. He allowed him to barter linens, woollens and other goods for needed supplies, approved of a dinner at which Spaniards and Englishmen sat down together. Nevertheless, a shot was mysteriously fired from the fortress, and the strangers, taking fright, departed in a hurry. Three or four days afterward, some of their number landed near the capital and stole meat, eggs, vegetables and clothing. That was the last heard of them, but in due course the Spanish King wrote to say that he strongly disapproved of the laxity which had led the authorities at Santo Domingo to receive a foreign ship.

The Englishman's report to Henry VIII, if he ever made one, has been lost. Some authorities contend, therefore, that it may have been a roving merchant who called at Santo Domingo. As the weight of evidence is heavily in favor of Rut, it seems overscrupulous to deny him the credit.

No further intrusion of note occurred for ten years. Then, in 1537, French pirates in small, swift vessels, acting independently, swooped down on the Caribbean. One of them attacked Santiago-de-Cuba, got little for his pains, but terrified the whole island. A second landed

at the mouth of the Chagres River on the Isthmus of Panama and held the village there until he had plundered it at leisure. Another, or perhaps the same, did damage on the coast of Honduras. A hostile sail was seen off Cartagena. One of the earliest plate fleets with the cream of Peruvian loot was intercepted by big-time promoters of Dieppe, France, and nine of the ships cut off. The next few years were progressively disastrous. In 1538, a single corsair did cruel damage in Hispaniola and Cuba, occasioning the report that the presence of the French was "shameless, bold and continuous."

These depredations caused a change in Spanish methods. Individual vessels carrying precious merchandise had always been armed and sometimes given the protection of a consort. The distinction between the functions of royal and privately-owned craft had been somewhat vague. A King's ship rarely put to sea without cargo aboard on which private persons had paid freight charges. And any ship could be ordered to fight the King's battles. The new problem was to scour the trade lanes and scare off or destroy pirates, and for this a specialized navy was needed. It also became evident that treasure should never be risked on haphazard voyages. So in 1543 it was ordered that stocks should be accumulated in Mexico and on the Isthmus of Panama, for shipment twice a year in gigantic convoyed fleets.

A formal war with France broke out simultaneously and was the cause of the change being at once enforced. That year the pearl island of Cubagua was raided by battleships and the settlement burned. The Caribbean experienced no other maritime blow officially struck by the enemy, but this one stimulated a fresh influx of French irregulars at whose heels came a few strays, including Moslems from Algiers and possibly a Dutch foreloper. However, it can be accepted that piracy in the West Indies during the first two decades after 1537 was a French business venture unilluminated by any vision of an imperial future there.

Peace was signed in 1544, but lasted only eight years, and with the resumption of war the French King created a precedent which Elizabeth of England was soon to imitate. He sent the first privateers to the Caribbean, headed by François le Clerc, as gifted a fellow in his way as his far better known junior, Sir Francis Drake. Le Clerc had a wooden leg, so the Spaniards called him *Pié de Palo*, and in such blood-and-thunder literature as concedes him a place he is pictured as a gory buccaneer hobbling around on a stump. To describe Le Clerc as a buccaneer, as writers who should have known better do, is to antedate the proper use of that term by at least seventy-five years. Nor was he a pirate. His sovereign ennobled him and addressed him as "*Bienaimé*,"

the sort of attention never paid by the French Court in that discriminating age to a pirate.

Le Clerc was in command of ten ships. He and his lieutenant, Jacques de Sore, were privileged to war by any means within their power against the Spaniards in the Indies, to pillage their cities and to keep the lion's share of the reward. Le Clerc gave the Main a prime scourging. Sore took Santiago-de-Cuba in 1554, making a jest of the guns that were hauled down to the beach and loading his boats with practically all the portable wealth the town contained, 80,000 pesos worth of it. The following year, he landed near Havana and stormed it in thirty minutes. The city was looted and burned, the inhabitants forced to ransom their lives with their last hidden *maravedís*. The only buildings left partly standing were the church, the hospital and the fort, the last-named having been so well defended that the commander got honorable terms.

These deeds forecast the bitter days when successive generations of more prosperous colonists would know the hawk-like descents of Drake, the sadism of l'Olonnois, the fury of Morgan. But the only Spaniard who appears to have grasped the implications was Admiral Pedro Menéndez, stout sea-fighter and able executive, a genuine admiral and not a sailor of fortune flaunting the title as so much bombast. He was on duty in the Caribbean, sometimes afloat and sometimes ashore, serving the young King, Philip II, who had just come to the throne. From the date of the capture of Havana, Menéndez pursued zealously a plan with three co-ordinated objectives:

The building of impregnable fortresses at the key points, such as Santo Domingo, Havana, Vera Cruz, Cartagena, Nombre de Dios and Porto Bello, all of which he projected and some of which he saw.

The raising of naval efficiency to a point where Spain could be confident of defeating intruders in battle, convoying her treasure fleets safely, and extirpating pirates.

The complete suppression of foreign trading and smuggling in the middle region of the New World.

Curiously enough, England played no part in the early robbery under arms, unless we count the chicken-stealing of John Rut at Santo Domingo in 1527. When her flag next appeared, a quarter of a century later, it was flown by a dealer in illicit goods, notably black ivory. John Hawkins was his name, a name to be written in blood and remembered on the roll of daring freebooters. But at the time he was a modest peddler whose father had taught him how to trap Negroes in Africa and dispose of them here and there about the world, with sidelines of



PEDRO MENENDEZ DE AVILES.

*Natural de Avilés en Asturias, Comendador  
de la orden de Santiago, Representante de la Flota  
de Indias, Gobernador de la Florida, y  
Comandante de la Armada de España.*



cloth and cordage, liquors and arms. He had been correctly informed that the Spanish Indies now offered the best market for such things.

The colonists were in a state of despair about their needs from abroad. They did not object to the principle of "buying Spanish," but they were left helpless by the shortage of supplies and the heavy customs duties imposed on the little that did arrive. Their complaint was general. Scarcity of labor, however, disturbed them most.

Their system had become dependent on Negro slaves, at least in the islands. But the home Government regarded these pitiful chattels as a source of profit to itself, rather than an agency for building colonies. It farmed out slaving licenses at so exorbitant a figure that the retail price inevitably was high. Then it taxed each purchase of a Negro and each per-annual possession of one. If any of this revenue had been used to better the lot of colonists and slaves, there might have been some excuse for it. Rapacity was the sole motive, and it defeated its ends. The traffic of the license holders was slim, because their customers could not afford to buy. Imports were diminishing rapidly and tax collections falling off.

John Hawkins appeared with four ships in March, 1563, at Puerto Plata on the north coast of Hispaniola. The local officials afterward excused themselves to the King for allowing the Lutheran, as they called him, to bring his goods ashore. They said that if they had not done so he might have become fractious, and that by trading with him they induced him to depart. The tongue in the cheek when these ingenuous words were written is easily divined.

For the people of Puerto Plata, aided and abetted by the officials, had rushed to do business with Captain Hawkins. The latter sold 105 slaves on which he meticulously paid 350,646 *reales* in customs duties. He also disposed of a fine lot of silks, got rid of his last remnants at minor ports and sailed home with a profit.

The next year he was back in the Caribbean with a larger stock, but he was too crafty to go near Hispaniola. The Governor there had received his orders in terms so harsh that if the honest trader had tried to repeat he would have been forced to hang him. Hawkins took his smooth salesmanship to Venezuela, where he operated up and down the coast until well into 1565. He refined on his methods, paying duties on merchandise of every sort, but not the special tax on slaves. The latter was an injustice, he said, and by eliminating it he could make a better price. The customers agreed heartily. He filled his order book for future deliveries, guaranteeing super-excellent wares. At Rio de la Hacha, he obtained a character certificate, signed by a notary public,

which set forth that he had been upright and peaceable, "working no harm to any person whatsoever of any quality or description."

Queen Elizabeth was delighted with the bullion and jewels which he brought home, his glowing report of new markets. She had invested money in this second voyage of his and had been paid handsome dividends. She showed her gratitude by knighting him. Blandly he chose as his crest, "a demi-Moor, proper, in chains." But we cannot judge Sir John as we might judge the owner of a modern textile mill, for instance, who should emboss on his notepaper the picture of an anemic child operating a loom. Slaving was considered a gentlemanly calling, and one that had divine approval, by the men of the Sixteenth Century.

A stiff protest by the Spanish Crown over the commercial trespassing by Hawkins in Hispaniola and Venezuela caused Elizabeth to forbid her new knight to go on the voyage he had planned for 1566. He sent John Lovell in his place, but the affair was badly managed. Lovell teamed up with a French smuggler named Bontemps. They attempted to work the Venezuelan coast a second time, and were roughly handled by a Governor who knew that his job was at stake. Desultory fighting occurred. A considerable number of slaves were put ashore, because it had proved impossible even to buy food and water for them. The incident testifies to the relative humanity of Lovell. Most of his contemporaries would have killed the Negroes rather than yield them unsold.

Sir John Hawkins and the Queen were vastly annoyed at the failure. They planned an expedition in a spirit quite different from that which had actuated the previous ones. When Elizabeth lent her warships, *Jesus of Lubeck* and *Minion*, heavily armed, she inaugurated the privateering against Spain that gave the maritime dash and glitter to her reign. It was the logical reaction of a young Protestant monarch to the regime of her own Catholic sister, "Bloody Mary," and the latter's consort, that Philip II whose western dominions she now proposed to loot. The world-wide empire won by Britain can be said to have stemmed from this change in policy.

The fleet comprised six known ships, ranging from the seven-hundred-ton *Jesus* to the thirty-two-ton *Angel*, as well as several tiny craft. The *Judith*, fifty tons, was commanded by a Devonshire blade in his twenties, seeking a reputation. His name was Francis Drake.

Hawkins sailed in October, 1567, and went first to the Guinea coast, as usual, for a supply of blacks. On reaching the Caribbean, he made a round of ports too numerous to mention here. Apologists have claimed

that his intentions were still strictly mercantile and pacific. The writer cannot accept this view. Everywhere the fleet appeared, Hawkins struck a war-like pose, unlimbering his guns and seeming to threaten a bombardment unless business were done with him. His men brawled ashore. The Spanish authorities countered in many cases by prohibiting all intercourse and massing their forces for battle. In others, they grudgingly consented to trade, with results disillusioning to the English, who had to dispose of their goods at bargain rates.

It is true that Hawkins started for home in August, 1568, without having attacked a Spanish town or robbed a Spanish ship. He may have been studying the prospects for a type of enterprise with which he was unfamiliar and have concluded to wait until another time. But he took the longest route to England, by way of the Florida Channel, and there is nothing to show that he did not contemplate a last-minute coup at Havana. A hurricane smote him off Dry Tortugas, spun his fleet in circles, then drove it westward with such violence that it fetched up at Vera Cruz. The island of San Juan de Ulúa had recently been fortified under the Menéndez plan. It was impossible to shelter in the harbor without permission from the Spanish garrison, and this Hawkins solicited courteously, pointing out that his ships needed repairs. He was allowed to enter, whereupon, around September 18, he seized San Juan de Ulúa from behind and completely dominated the harbor.

There is documentary proof that Hawkins knew a fleet was due to arrive from Spain. He may have hoped to meet and plunder it in the Florida Channel. He was probably not aware, however, that it was an exceptionally powerful fleet, and that the new Viceroy of Mexico, Martin Enríquez, was aboard one of the vessels, escorted by a large body of soldiers. When the armada hove in sight, Hawkins realized his peril. Nothing remained but to brazen out the matter, which he did with aplomb. He sent terms to the Viceroy, providing for an exchange of hostages to insure that the Spanish would be permitted to land and the English to depart peacefully.

On the twenty-first, the Viceroy's ships came in. Enríquez brooded for two days over the scandal of the fortress being in "Lutheran" hands, then ordered a general attack by land and water. Each side accused the other of treachery. Both had been guilty of it, Hawkins when he double-crossed the men who gave him shelter from the hurricane, Enríquez when he violated an agreement based on the existing facts. It is of small import to grade the iniquity at this distance of time.

Outmatched in every way, the English were crushed after a terrific



battle. Hawkins escaped with the *Jesus* and *Minion*, but had to abandon the former at sea to the enemy. He reached Plymouth with only fifteen survivors aboard the *Minion*. Drake took the *Judith* to safety. All the other vessels were lost, with hundreds of casualties in dead, wounded and prisoners.

The next phase of English privateering in the Caribbean had Drake for protagonist, but we have not heard the last of Sir John Hawkins.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### FLORIDA DISPUTED

AT THE height of the piratical revels of the French, the illicit trading of the English, in the Caribbean, Florida became the scene of the first attempt by European rivals to plant a colony within Spain's manifest zone of influence. It should be remarked, in passing, that although the Pope's line of demarcation had given the whole North American continent to the Hispanic kingdom, the latter had not troubled to explore beyond the warm seas and never did lay serious claim to the Atlantic littoral north of the Carolinas. It was quite a different matter with the Florida peninsula. Spanish Governors had had glowing illusions about it. They had paid a high price in blood to learn that it was no treasure house, had grown disgusted and had long neglected it. But it was theirs, and they valued it for future development.

In France, Admiral Gaspar de Coligny, the great Huguenot, saw that his co-religionists were bound to be treated with growing severity, and he conceived the idea of establishing asylums for them in the New World. He persuaded the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, to approve his ventures, arguing that they would augment the influence of France. One expedition failed in Brazil. Another set out from Havre de Grace in February, 1562, under the command of Jean Ribault, whose orders were to report on the prospects in North America. He had two ships and large crews, but inadequate equipment for pioneering ashore.

Ribault sighted the coast of Florida a little below St. Augustine in seventy-two days. His voyage is said to have been the first crossing of the Atlantic without intermediate landfalls, such as the Spaniards made at the Azores, Canary or Madeira Islands. He at once turned north and came to anchor in the mouth of the St. John's River, which he called the Mai on account of the month. The natives proved kindly, a novel attitude for Indians in Florida, and Ribault was tempted to remain. But he cruised on to the South Carolina harbor named by him, and still called, Port Royal. Here thirty of his men decided to essay a settlement. He gave them provisions, ammunition and a few tools, and sailed back to France.

Port Royal antedated Plymouth Rock by fifty-eight years. Theoretically, it should have been a success. The physical conditions were

favorable, and the location far removed from Spanish strongholds. It might have been left undisturbed until the colony was strong enough to defend itself. But the thirty Protestant Frenchmen lacked resolution for any project except returning home when nostalgia overcame them. They actually built a small boat in which, starving, they recrossed the ocean, and the stories the survivors told served to focus Huguenot attention on the Mai River rather than Port Royal.

Coligny's second North American expedition started in the spring of 1564, with the avowed intention of reclaiming the wilderness. It comprised three ships filled to capacity with men of a more rowdy type than their predecessors. The number has been estimated at three hundred. There were few genuine Huguenots among them, though all had pretended to be of that faith to obtain passage. Captain René de Laudonnière, a competent seaman, was their leader.

The same anchorage in the Mai that Ribault had chosen gave them shelter, and the same friendly Indians greeted them. The pioneers immediately set to work to build a fort at the foot of a bluff, on land that has long since been washed into the river. It was triangular in shape, scientifically constructed from plans drawn by an architect Coligny had sent for the purpose. The name given it was Fort Caroline.

Several parties penetrated the interior on futile quests for gold, the latter being an obsession by no means peculiar to the Spaniards. For the rest, the colonists do not appear to have known how to start plantations. They depended on the Indians for food and marked time, awaiting the promised arrival of large re-enforcements under Ribault. These came, but in circumstances that were like a jest of fate.

On August 3, 1565, at a moment when despondency had gripped the sorry band, a large ship and several small ones were seen approaching the mouth of the river. They caused a panic, for they did not suggest the sort of craft Coligny would have sent. The large vessel was, in fact, the flagship of John Hawkins, returning from his second voyage to the Caribbean, and the English freetrader's call was for the purpose of getting fresh water.

Hawkins came up the river in a pinnace, expressed himself as amazed at the presence of the French, but was quite willing to fraternize. Laudonnière told him his troubles and received the offer of a free passage to Europe for all the colonists. This was declined for fear of treachery and an odd bargain was struck, a disastrous bargain for the French as it turned out. Hawkins sold Laudonnière a ship, accepting in lieu of money most of the larger cannon from Fort Caroline.

As soon as the English departed, preparations were made to desert

the settlement. The fort had been dismantled and the ship loaded and readied to sail for France when, on August 29, Ribault's fleet with five hundred new colonists, including women and children, arrived in the Mai. It brought abundant foodstuffs and other stores, but no cannon to replace the ones that had been bartered. The increase in the number of fighting men was thought to offset the shortage of artillery.

Fort Caroline took on the appearance of a boom town. Optimism prevailed for six short days. On September 4, a giant hulk, as naval craft went in the Sixteenth Century, the 950-ton Spanish warship *San Pelayo*, sailed slowly to the anchorage and hailed the French laconically:

"Are you Catholics, or Lutherans?"

An officer answered that he and many of the men were of the Protestant faith, but that they served the King of France.

The Spanish commander identified himself as Admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Adelantado of Florida. "I am come to hang or behead all Lutherans I may find. The Catholics shall be well treated," he added.

Miss Irene A. Wright, in her valuable book, *The Early History of Cuba*, calls Menéndez "the first truly great man to cast his shadow over Cuba. It was not somber enough, however, to drive from her coast and ports which he sought to guard those heretic traders who were his particular abhorrence. . . . Neither he nor his times recognized the existence of a simple and irresistible principle which may not be disregarded: the economic law of supply and demand."

Mention was made, a few pages back, of the larger policy of Menéndez, which looked to impregnable defenses for the Caribbean and the exclusion of every form of foreign competition. It should be added that in a bigoted age he was the most bigoted Catholic among the Spanish leaders in America, and that as he grew older his concern for Florida became a mania. He told Philip II toward the end of 1564, while on a visit to Spain:

"After the salvation of my soul, there is nothing I desire more than to see myself in Florida saving souls."

We may rest assured that this missionary zeal did not blind him to military considerations, nor hamper him in using statecraft to achieve his ends. He found the Huguenot settlement "intolerable" because it was too close for comfort to the route of the Mexican plate fleet, and because he believed that the French, to aid their designs, would foster a revolt of Negro slaves throughout the Spanish possessions. No one before him had expressed fears of a general servile insurrection. But

Menéndez was a farseeing man, and his warning gives us an idea of how notably the imported Negro element had outstripped the white.

Philip II moved like a snail, unless prodded. So the Council of the Indies, probably at the instigation of Menéndez, reminded him that the Pope had given him a divine right to the land the Huguenots had dared to occupy, and urged him to expel the heretics lest the true faith suffer. On March 20, 1565, therefore, the Admiral was appointed Adelantado of Florida, with the special mission of expelling the French, wide latitude in the methods he might choose to employ, and an enlargement of his functions at sea. He was to be Captain-General of the armada, "to guard the coasts and ports of the Indies." The honor of financing the Florida expedition was to be largely his, but as he had "vowed a vow to our Lord Jesus Christ that all in this world He shall give me or I shall have, obtain and acquire shall be expended" on the business, Menéndez undoubtedly was satisfied. He is credited with having spent over one million ducats (the ducat is valued at \$2.38) in equipping the thirty-four ships, carrying 2,646 men, which he immediately got ready.

He had appointed San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the rendezvous for his fleet, but was too impatient to wait until all the ships arrived from Spain. On August 15, he had sailed for northern Florida in the *San Pelayo*, with some dozen small craft following. He took with him five hundred soldiers, two hundred sailors, and a large number of ecclesiastics, peasant farmers and Negro slaves. As he neared the coast on the last night of the month, a huge meteor blazed above the flagship and plunged in a red arc into the land ahead of him. This portent gratified Menéndez, as showing God's approval of his coming with fire and sword against the Lutherans.

The inlet of St. Augustine, which the French had ignored, attracted the Admiral. He reconnoitered, landed part of his force and obtained information about Fort Caroline from a band of Indians. Then he pressed on in the *San Pelayo*, to snarl his challenge at Ribault's fleet.

Both Ribault and Laudonnière were ashore, the latter ill of a fever. But on learning the fate reserved for Lutherans, the sailors yelled their defiance, and Menéndez discharged a broadside. The French ships scattered, and after a long chase in which he did not succeed in catching one of them the Admiral returned to St. Augustine. There, on September 8, he formally declared the place a city and the capital of Florida, naming it in the Spanish San Agustín. He threw up earthworks, having decided to make no further move until the rest of his armada arrived from Puerto Rico. As insurance against accidents of man or

the weather, he dispatched the *San Pelayo* on the ninth to Cuba to pick up a special draft of troops. Thereby she escaped certain destruction in a hurricane that cost the Spaniards dearly, but was the stroke of doom to the Huguenots.

Ribault, informed that the *San Pelayo* had gone, concluded that his best chance lay in taking the offensive. He packed most of his available fighting men aboard seven ships, six of those he had brought from France and the one purchased from Hawkins. Of the males left at Fort Caroline to guard the women and children, only ten had weapons.

He sailed down the coast, and on the morning of September 16 was off St. Augustine, catching the Spaniards unprepared. Their crews were in large part ashore, aiding in the building of the fort. It looked as if Ribault would be able to sink or capture at will. But there were clouds of livid hue on the eastern horizon. The breeze had been erratic, the heat oppressive. If those European sailors had been familiar with tropical weather lore, they would have turned back, remembering that it was September, the worst month for hurricanes. But they continued to stand in, and abruptly a tempest of major proportions, accompanied by torrential rain, struck the coast. Every ship on both sides foundered, except three Spanish craft of insignificant tonnage. The French contrived to maneuver southward before they were wrecked on the smooth beaches about Matanzas Inlet. Many were drowned, but the majority struggled through the waves to safety.

At St. Augustine, the implacable spirit of Menéndez saw the hurricane as a perfect opportunity for having done with Fort Caroline. The garrison there must be depleted, and Ribault would be unable to help. He called out his full force and marched it through the downpour, over a terrain of which he had no knowledge. He found the gun carriages of the French works empty, the ramparts breached by the storm, and his troops swarmed over them unopposed. By the Admiral's orders, some fifty women and children were spared; but 130 men were slain, only fifteen taken alive. Laudonnière and a few companions escaped into the swamps.

A small ship left behind by Ribault lay in the river, where it had ridden out the hurricane. The Spaniards could not reach it, and lacking artillery they vented their spite by bawling insults from the shore. Menéndez ordered the fifteen male prisoners hanged to trees where the boat's company could see them. He elucidated their fate in his terse way, by means of a placard raised above their dangling forms:

*"No por Franceses, Sino por Luteranos* (Not as Frenchmen, but as Lutherans)."

Laudonnière and his stragglers had the luck to be picked up by the ship as it crept off to France. Menéndez made arrangements for the women, children and vast stores to be moved to St. Augustine, while he departed posthaste to deal with the survivors of Ribault's flotilla. He found two hundred men at Matanzas Inlet, coaxed them into his camp under a pledge of immunity and butchered them. Two days later, Ribault and his remaining force of about 350 men came wandering northward to the inlet, where they halted on the far shore. They were unaware of the fate of the two hundred.

Menéndez invited them to cross, again offering good terms. More than a third accepted, among them Ribault himself. These were no sooner in the power of the champion of the true faith than he had them put to the sword, with the exception of sixteen who swore that they were the best of Catholics and, as an afterthought, expert ship carpenters. Dr. Gonzalo de Meras, brother-in-law of the Admiral, is said to have claimed the privilege of cutting down Ribault.

History is imprecise concerning the 185 or so who had refused to surrender. Many were drowned in the inundated countryside, as they fled after the massacre. Others were lost among the Indians, were perhaps in a few cases adopted as tribesmen. A group built a boat near Canaveral Cape, intending to sail to France, but were captured by the Spaniards and, capriciously, their lives spared. The Huguenot version of the whole grim episode rests upon the stories of Laudonnière and of one articulate sailor who escaped death at Matanzas. The latter means Hog-Slaughterings—a gibe that stuck.

With the heretics off his mind, Menéndez went back to Fort Caroline, which he rebuilt and named Fort Mateo. He strongly garrisoned both this place and St. Augustine, enjoined the founding of churches and the cultivation of the soil. On October 25 he left for Cuba.

In fifty-one days, this imperious fanatic and military genius had extirpated the French in Florida and made Spain's title effective. The deed of Dominique de Gourgues, a Gascon nobleman, who two and a half years later demolished San Mateo as an act of vengeance, did not alter the decision. De Gourgues retired without even attempting a settlement.

But with his great and terrible triumph, Pedro Menéndez also unleashed the war to the death that from then on marked the relations of Spaniards and other Europeans in the Caribbean. He was in a very real sense a fighting arm of the Inquisition. He consigned some of his prisoners to the adepts of the wheel, the thumbscrew and the rack, and was always charmed to hear that the finale had been the *sanbenito*

robe and the heap of faggots. Until the Holy Office came to the New World in 1570, he sent his choice victims to Spain.

English opinion inclines to credit the disaster at San Juan de Ulúa with having started an abyssmal hatred. This may have been true about Drake and his earliest British emulators. The lives of the prisoners at San Juan de Ulúa, however, were spared, and though some were afterward tortured by the Inquisition, it was not as a direct result of the battle.

The Protestant world, generally speaking, had already begun to react to the massacre in Florida. The butchering of Arawáks, previously, had been shrugged aside. But when Menéndez slew the French colonists because they were "Lutherans," he did something new and searing. The presence of the Inquisition at Mexico City, Cartagena and Lima sealed a conviction of horror that did not pass for centuries. It was less an enmity between Catholics and Protestants than between the nation that upheld the Inquisition and the nations that loathed it.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### SIR FRANCIS DRAKE AND COMPANY

THE young Devonshire captain, Francis Drake, who pulled his fifty-ton *Judith* out of the caldron of San Juan de Ulúa in September, 1568, has been accused of thereby deserting his chief, Sir John Hawkins. It is true that Drake's casualties were relatively light, and that he sailed back to England alone. But he had fought well while there was any sense in fighting. Among sailors he had won the reputation of being a brave, shrewd fellow and more of a natural leader than Hawkins. The latter certainly bore him no lasting malice, for we find Drake emerging at once as the man financially backed by Sir John and others to see whether contraband could still be sold in America. The idea of bullying the Spaniards for large returns was held in abeyance. But possibly in 1569, without a doubt in 1570 and 1571, Drake cruised the Caribbean in modest vessels and made nice profits.

That venturesome spirit had other aims, which may or may not have been known to his sponsors. He regarded his work as a prelude, and surveyed the theater of future strife to judge how the Spanish system could best be taken by the throat and plundered. He collected facts about the fortified cities, the naval patrols of Admiral Menéndez, and particularly how treasure was moved across the Isthmus and stored to await the convoyed fleets. He made friends with French pirates, as well as with the Cimarrones or escaped Negro slaves of the Spanish colonies. Drake at this period was an espionage agent using illicit trading as a cover. He even established a headquarters ashore, a haven near Aclá, scene of the execution of Balboa, which Cimarrones and Indians helped him to keep secret from the Spaniards and which he called Port Pheasant.

That he had been able to do all this was due, however, to a great crisis in Europe. The formation of the Holy League against the Turks inevitably had drawn much of Spain's naval strength from the Caribbean. Under the auspices of Pope Pius V, the Spanish Monarchy, the Venetian Republic and the Papal States had organized an armada to check the last and fiercest challenge of the Moslem world. The foe had wrested Cyprus from the Christians, had besieged Malta, operating with a swarm of galleys that threatened to dominate the Mediterranean.

Their upstart sea power was the most frightening thing that Philip II had ever known.

Historians of the West are prone to forget that Drake's last year of reconnoitering before he struck at Nombre de Dios was the year of Lepanto. On October 7, 1571, the lustrous Don John of Austria, aged twenty-four, led three hundred sail to battle with the Turks and crushed them utterly in one of the decisive sea actions of all time. The war continued, however, and the Spanish fleet had to be held intact. At about that juncture, Drake was returning to England to equip two small but deadly raiders.

In Plymouth he obtained the *Pasha*, of seventy tons, and refurbished the *Swan*, of twenty-five tons, previously commanded by him. Food-stuffs for a year were loaded, and the ships "heedfully provided with all munitions and artillery," as well as the parts of "three dainty pinnaces" to be assembled when needed. The crews totaled seventy-three, and it is worth remarking that only one man among them had reached the age of thirty. Francis, the eldest of twelve sons, had enlisted two of his brothers and given one of them charge of the smaller boat. But the lieutenant immortalized in romantic memoirs was the Devonshire lad, John Oxenham, who cried that "unless our Captain do beat me from his company, I will follow him by God's grace!"

Drake set out at the end of May, 1572, and reached Port Pheasant in mid-July, to discover that marauders had stolen the goods he had left buried there and burned the cabins. He concluded that it had not been done by Spanish soldiery hunting for him. So, believing it still useful as a secret base, he built a wooden fort there, the first structure erected by the English in the Caribbean region. The pinnaces brought from Plymouth were put together in a week. Drake had evolved the original plan of surprising Nombre de Dios in these light, half-decked boats, which could either be sailed or rowed. They would be able to creep up the coast unobserved, or at the worst would hardly be suspected of belligerent designs. Some accounts say that at the last moment he had the aid of an English rover named James Ranse, who happened along with a shallop in tow.

The pinnaces carrying fifty-three men—and maybe Ranse's shallop with a few more—entered the bay of Nombre de Dios near midnight on July 28. There ensued one of the most gallant, preposterous and unfruitful deeds of bravado in the history of privateering. The terminus of the Gold Road was strongly garrisoned. Its royal warehouse was filled with bullion. To capture the place would be a prodigy, but it could not be held for twenty-four hours, nor could any appreciable

amount of treasure be removed in boats that had been awash with the weight of men aboard them. But Drake loved heroic gestures. This was a rehearsal for that "singeing of the King of Spain's beard," which he afterward gloried in threatening and very often performed.

He landed half his force at the edge of the town, under John Oxenham and his own brother, John, then flitted across the waterfront and stepped ashore with the rest. The orders were to converge on the plaza with shouting and a great noise of drums and trumpets. The pikes and many of the arrows had balls of oil-soaked waste wrapped around their tips. They were to be lighted with the flint-and-steel before being brought into play.

The citizens were fast asleep, the soldiers, too, and the one gunner serving as sentry for a battery took to his heels when the English abruptly staged their inferno of clamor and flames. It seemed as if the town were being assaulted by a large army. The adventurers rushed the plaza from two sides, and almost immediately were masters of this central point. It is described in the chronicles as the market place, but probably was the traditional grand square around which all Spanish cities were built.

Presently the church bell began to ring, the militia rallied and charged the plaza, firing *harquebuses*. Drake received a wound in the leg, and his trumpeter was killed instantly. In the melee that followed, the burning pikes and arrows shattered the nerves of the Spaniards, who broke and fled. The English remained in undisputed possession of *Nombre de Dios* for several hours, but it profited them little. Prisoners showed them the Governor's palace and the King's warehouse. Enormous ingots of silver, too heavy to move, were like a provocation, the heaped gold and uncut gems a *Golconda* from which they plucked samples.

At dawn, Drake abandoned his incredible conquest and retreated to a near-by island, seizing en route a Spanish ship laden with wine, which gave the company the means for a wild celebration. An envoy from *Nombre de Dios* came there the next day under a flag of truce, to inquire gravely whether the fire-tipped arrows had been poisoned and whether the Captain were the same Englishman who had been active in these waters for the past two or three years. Drake answered that he never poisoned his weapons, and that as to the other matter, he was *Drake*, who proposed to collect "some of their Harvest which they got out of the Earth."

Before long, they spoke of him as "*El Draque*," a phenomenon personified rather than a robber with, to Spanish ears, an odd-sounding English family name.

For Drake now organized his affairs brilliantly. He schemed, from hiding at Port Pheasant, to stick up the pack trains on their way to Nombre de Dios and Porto Bello, and sent scouts to select the best spots for ambushades. He formed a special band of Cimarrones, knit a partnership with Guillaume le Testu, a French pirate. A new base, on Slaughter Island in the Gulf of San Blas, had strategic advantages, but proved unhealthy.

That autumn, the ships went out and raided at will. They destroyed villages and took every small Spanish vessel they met. These forays were along the Main, in order to distract attention from the quarter where the big blow was to fall. Drake even menaced Cartagena, sailing the *Pasha* and the *Swan* close to the fortifications of that rich place and back again. He knew he was not strong enough to attack it—not yet. But his flourish drew enemy warcraft from the Isthmus.

In January, 1573, the plate fleet arrived at Nombre de Dios to load Peruvian treasure. That meant that the accumulations at Panama would be hurried across. Drake led his guerrillas, English, French and Cimarrones, in a series of fierce strokes at Venta Cruces, the inland halting point, and at the moving trains. He won immense booty. On one of these excursions, he and John Oxenham made their celebrated ascent of a tree and gazed down the slope of the continental divide at the Pacific first, then backward at the Caribbean. But E. F. Benson and other biographers of Drake are wrong by at least a hundred miles in placing it near the spot from which Balboa discovered the Great South Sea.

The possibilities on the Gold Road were exhausted by mid-April. The adventurers shared their gains and took stoically the heavy losses suffered. Both of Drake's brothers were dead, one in a sea fight, the other of fever. Guillaume le Testu, the French pirate, had been killed at Venta Cruces. Punctuating his transit with a few more seizures of Spanish ships, Drake returned to England in August, 1573. He was feted as a hero. Queen Elizabeth went through the motions of "pardoning" him for having embarked on his enterprise without authority from her.

It would be impracticable to give details here about the host of imitators who worried the Spaniards during the remaining years of the Sixteenth Century. They were free lances, and the individual harm they could do was slight. John Oxenham, for instance, with one ship and seventy men attempted in 1575 to duplicate his friend's tactics on the Isthmus. He found that the pack trains were now under heavy military guard. Marching on to the Pacific, he built a small boat and had the distinction of being the first Englishman to sail upon that ocean. But

he was soon captured and "put to the question" fiendishly by the Holy Inquisition.

The truth is, that Englishmen with sufficient means to operate in a large way preferred to await the magic leadership of Drake as long as he lived, while Frenchmen postponed the development of a leadership of their own because it was a better game to plunder in his track. George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, was an exception, but Clifford's eleven forays were mostly failures until after the death of Drake, when he had a notable success.

The popular impression, however, that Drake was continuously raiding the Caribbean is incorrect. He went there on but two other occasions. His exploits in between were world-wide. So far as the Caribbean is concerned, he did furnish the high lights of a method and a policy, and historians have made no mistake in concentrating upon him.

Queen Elizabeth employed him after Nombre de Dios in the bloody and discreditable expedition to Ireland commanded by her favorite, Essex. Drake never bragged about it. There is reason to think that he was revolted by a carnage of peasants who had nothing to yield but their lives. We next hear of him conferring with the Queen about the most ambitious of his projects, the circumnavigation of the globe by the route Magellan had found, with incidental plaguing of Spanish cities on the Pacific coasts of the two Americas and looting of Spanish ships wherever met. This he accomplished between 1577 and 1580 in the *Golden Hind*. The spring following his return, Elizabeth knighted him, to the chagrin of Don Bernadino de Mendoza, Ambassador from the Court of Madrid, who complained that she had honored "the master-thief of the unknown world."

Drake's new wealth and prestige opened a political career to him. He served as Mayor of Plymouth, and for two years was Member of Parliament for Bossiney. But he was no man to be wasted ashore as Philip II's jealousy of England's sea power hardened to open aggression. All English merchantmen in Spanish ports were sequestered. Plans for the Invincible Armada were already brewing. Elizabeth, resigned at last to war, allied herself with the Netherlands, then in revolt against Spain. She sent for Sir Francis Drake the day she made that decision, and gave him letters of marque. He was to hit where it would hurt most, at the source of her royal cousin's financial strength, his American treasure houses.

Twenty-five ships carrying 2,300 men, the most formidable fleet of privateers to date, assembled under Plymouth Hoe and sailed Septem-

ber 12, 1585. Drake's Vice-Admiral was Martin Frobisher, one of the outstanding Elizabethan seamen, whose name is associated with heroic efforts to discover the Northwest Passage.

After stripping the enemy at the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of Africa, Drake steered straight west to Dominica, the Carib inhabitants of which had been left undisturbed since the time of Columbus. English comments in 1585 might have been made by the first Spaniards. "A savage people, which goe all naked, their skinne coloured with some painting of a reddish tawny, very personable and handsome strong men." But St. Kitts (the recognized diminutive for St. Christopher), where the ships spent Christmas, seemed uninhabited.

Drake's plan was to smite the city of Santo Domingo during the holiday season. Though it was the first settlement, the oldest capital, and had increased in population to some 7,500 with an upper class that lived in luxury, no pirate had made a serious attempt upon it. The walls of the fortifications were thick, the guns reputed to be of great carrying power. But "El Draque" came with numbers and armaments that rated mightily in those days. He reached a mooring place a few miles to the west on New Year's Day, and that night landed ten companies which went into ambush without the foe realizing how large a force it was. In the morning, Drake feinted with boats at the opposite end of the city, causing the defenders to gather there. The English already ashore marched swiftly to the attack, and Santo Domingo capitulated after brief but bloody street fighting.

Now Sir Francis had come to the Caribbean with a definite and far from modest scheme of things. The grand objective was the city of Panama, and he had drawn up two itineraries for reaching it, with estimates of the ransoms that could be expected from the captured places, in addition to sheer loot. One of the routes had been canceled at St. Kitts. The other was as follows:

|                      |                    |                        |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Santo Domingo        | to be ransomed for | 500,000 ducats         |
| Santa Marta          | to be ransomed for | 10,000 ducats          |
| Cartagena            | to be ransomed for | 1,000,000 ducats       |
| Panama               | to be ransomed for | 1,000,000 ducats       |
| Honduras Coast Towns | to be ransomed for | 100,000 ducats         |
|                      |                    | <hr/> 2,610,000 ducats |

By any reckoning, these ransoms would have been in excess of \$6,000,000. But at Santo Domingo, Drake found it impossible to extort more than 25,000 ducats, one-twentieth of his estimate. Highly an-

noyed, he made a sweep of everything movable, including from two to three hundred guns. He took four or five good ships he found in port and destroyed the remainder.

Santa Marta should have counted itself lucky that it had been valued at only 10,000 ducats. One-twentieth of that sum would have been pitiable, and we may assume that that was why Sir Francis dropped the town from his schedule and went to Cartagena, arriving late in February, 1586.

Yellow fever had long been present in the fleet, and its inroads became serious on the South American coast. Yet at Cartagena, Drake performed the greatest of his exploits in those parts, with the stout support of his "land general," Christopher Carleill. The defensive works of the town under the Menéndez plan had not been fully completed and they were weakly manned. There were only two galleys on station. Just as Drake had had a relatively free hand in 1570 and 1571, because of Spanish naval concentration against the Turks in the Mediterranean, he had it again as a result of the mobilizing of the Invincible Armada.

Cartagena stands a few feet above sea level at the eastern end of a sandspit that partly encloses the harbor. The rest of the barrier is the island of Tierra Bomba, at each end of which in Drake's time there was a channel, the Boca Grande nearer the city and the Boca Chica. Only the latter is now open, the former having been closed by artificial means. Cartagena faces inward. Its flank on the ocean has been protected from the beginning by formidable walls. Its waterfront is a landlocked basin or inner harbor. It was one of the hardest nuts in the Caribbean, and Drake was the first to crack it.

He sailed through the Boca Grande unopposed, then repeated his Santo Domingo maneuver. During the night he landed all the troops on the sandspit, fiercely bombarded at dawn the fort at the entrance to the inner harbor, and thus drew pressure from his soldiers as they marched along the beach to the assault of the city's breastworks. The fighting was sterner than it had been in Hispaniola. Indians using poisoned arrows aided the Spaniards. But Cartagena, the supposedly impregnable, fell as its older sister had fallen. The English remained there for six weeks before they collected a ransom of 110,000 ducats. They burned part of the city to enforce payment. The victory left them disillusioned in a monetary way, and the rapid spread of the fever spoiled their stomachs for Panama.

It was resolved at a general council to proceed home, because the cities they had captured, "with their goods and prisoners taken in them,

and the ransoms of the said cities being all put together, are found farre short to satisfie that expectation which by the generality of the enterprisers was first conceived"; and because of "the slendernesse of our strength, whereunto we be now reduced."

Drake made a demonstration in front of Havana on the return voyage, but did not attempt to land. He sacked St. Augustine, Florida—just twenty-one years old and a lean morsel—stopped at Roanoke Island, North Carolina, to rescue the survivors of Sir Walter Raleigh's ill-fated colony there, and docked at Plymouth on July 28, 1586.

His acts of regular warfare against Spain in European waters, crowned by the Homeric rout of the Armada in 1588, do not concern this history. When Drake reappeared in the Caribbean, his end was near. In August, 1595, he led forth a still stronger fleet than he had had ten years before, and again the goal was Panama. With him as Vice-Admiral was the aged Sir John Hawkins. But they followed a star of calamity, and their cabin-mate was Death. An attempt to seize San Juan, Puerto Rico, failed miserably. At the height of the action, as his ship rolled within range of the shore batteries, the knight of the "demi-Moor, proper, in chains," succumbed to natural causes. Drake withdrew and sailed by way of Havana, where he was repulsed, to Nicaragua and at last the Isthmus. He took Santa Marta and Nombre de Dios. Off Porto Bello, in January, 1596, following a bold but thwarted effort to cross to Panama, the greatest of the English privateers contracted a fever—some say dysentery—and passed after a fortnight's illness. He was given a sailor's burial, with round shot at the head and heels.

Meanwhile, Sir Walter Raleigh's much publicized, but unimportant first voyage in quest of El Dorado had taken place. He left England in 1595 with four ships and one hundred soldiers, on the strength of papers sold to him by one Captain George Popham who had abstracted them at sea from mail bound for Spain. They purported to identify the golden land as a principality called Manoa on the upper reaches of the Orinoco River. Raleigh attacked Trinidad and took prisoner the Governor, Don Antonio de Berrio, a devotee of the El Dorado myth, of whom something will be said in the next chapter. Queen Elizabeth's courtier then ascended the Orinoco to the point where the Caroni enters it, returned home and spread wonderful tales about his "discovery" of Guiana, which he knew only by hearsay.

In 1597, Sir Anthony Shirley plundered and burned Villa de la Vega, Jamaica. The century closed for the English in the Caribbean with the feat of George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, who in 1598 reversed



the discomfiture of Drake at San Juan, Puerto Rico. Commanding eighteen sail and a thousand soldiers, he captured the city and held it for six weeks. It was a barren triumph, for an epidemic ravaged his forces and he departed with abundant merchandise, but not a ducat of ransom.

No matter with what Elizabethan glamor one chooses to surround them, these enterprises were brigandage. A royal commission legalized military acts, but could not justify the wrenching of booty from private individuals. Drake, Hawkins, Clifford and their emulators, French as well as English, were of the hit-and-run school, anyway. They had no notion of establishing colonies and competing with Spain in the manner that would be most profitable when all was said and done. It was to be very different in the next century.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### AT THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

EMPHASIS has been laid on the privateers and trespassers who tormented the Spaniards in the Caribbean during the second half of the Sixteenth Century. They were symptomatic of what was to come, and assuredly they furnished the more vivid and familiar pages of the period's chronicles. But they did not seriously hamper the development of Spain's colonial empire, or drain it of gold. The plunder carried off by Drake and the rest was a fraction of the whole. For every town destroyed or crippled, a dozen new ones had been built. There had been a tremendous increase in the white population, and a steady enlargement of governmental machinery.

Reliable figures show that by 1600, slightly in excess of two hundred cities had been founded in the New World, and that they contained a Spanish citizenry of about 150,000. There were thirty different governments, including viceroyalties, captaincies-general and presidencies; nine *audiencias*, each of which took in several governments; and four archbishoprics, divided into twenty-four bishoprics. Most of the expansion had occurred in South America and the interior of Mexico, based on the mines of gold, silver and precious stones. The fabulous silver mountain of Potosí, for instance, had been discovered in 1545, in what is now Bolivia, and a city had immediately sprung up there. Potosí in 1600 had over 100,000 inhabitants, of whom a third were whites. It was, for the moment, the largest city in the hemisphere.

Population statistics are lacking for the Caribbean region. Omitting Mexico City and its environs, the islands and shores of the inland Sea may have supported twenty per cent of the Spaniards in America. The proportion of creoles or native-born whites was higher than anywhere else. The great majority—at least five-sixths—of the Negro slaves were there.

The original *audiencia* at Santo Domingo was followed by one each at Mexico City and Guadalajara, Mexico; Santiago de Guatemala, Panama and Bogotá. Some of them took in immense territory. The *audiencia* at Guadalajara had jurisdiction over all that part of the continent that lay to the north, while the one at Bogotá ruled the entire Spanish Main. Out of a total of nine *audiencias*, therefore, Middle

America had six. They were more important than any executive establishment except that of a Viceroy, and but two Viceroys had been appointed, to Mexico City and Lima.

As stated in an earlier chapter, the center of domination had shifted, even before the end of the first fifty years, from the island of Hispaniola to Panama. In visualizing this, remember the comparison between the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. It was as if the ancient world had had no way of egress until its traders came upon a narrow isthmus like that of Suez, and had at once built there a clearing house eclipsing all others. International jealousies revolved about Panama in direct ratio to Spain's exploitation of it.

The Greater Antilles had suffered by this change. Hispaniola had sunk economically to a colony of the second if not the third class, with agriculture neglected and its capital the only rich place. Eastern and central Cuba had experienced a similar collapse, and if it had not been for Havana—"Key to the New World and Bulwark of the Western Indies," as it was described by a royal decree—the superb island would foolishly have been thought a liability. Disorder prevailed there. Finding himself excommunicated as a result of a quarrel with the Bishop, Captain Francisco Carreño, Governor of Cuba in 1577, exclaimed: "And this is no country in which to pass a single night excommunicated!" He was thinking not so much of the peril to his soul as of the fact that a man cut off from communion with the Church could be killed by anyone without penalty.

At the end of the Sixteenth Century, Puerto Rico was still "a small and forgotten colony," according to Tomás Blanco, the modern Puerto Rican historian. "The yield of gold had been exhausted for more than half a century. . . . As commercial products, ginger was cultivated, hides exported and a few thousand *arrobas* [the *arroba* equals twenty-five pounds] of sugar were manufactured. Because of the poverty of the island, its military defence, including the building of fortresses, had been made a special charge on the treasury of New Spain [Mexico]."

The case of Jamaica was unique, its status having been altered by a royal compromise with the Columbus family which did not work out as intended. Diego, the Second Admiral, after completing his term as Governor of Hispaniola, had sued the Crown for the restoration of the immense grants and privileges originally guaranteed to the Discoverer. Diego died in 1526, leaving a five-year-old son, Don Luis, sometimes called the Third Admiral. The latter's mother, the highborn Doña Maria, was someone to reckon with. She spent most of her life in Santo Domingo, and to the day of her death there, in 1549, was honored

with the courtesy title of "Vireina." Doña Maria pressed the suit in favor of Luis. An agreement was reached in 1536 and confirmed in 1540.

Luis Columbus was created Duke of Veragua and Marquis of La Vega, the titles being taken from the province on the Isthmus of Panama and from the capital of Jamaica. He was given a liberal pension and several landed estates, the most extensive being the entire island of Jamaica. He was to hold the latter as a fief and be responsible for its local government within the Spanish kingdom. For this reason, he and his successors were often termed Marquis of Jamaica, rather than Marquis of La Vega. Theoretically, they should have resided in the country as hereditary Governors.

But Don Luis had none of the great qualities of his ancestors. He was a debauchee, with an odd penchant for committing bigamy. His fourth illegal marriage in church proved too much for King Philip II, who ordered him confined at Oran, North Africa. He died there in 1572, without ever having visited Jamaica. His titles passed to a lateral descendant.

The effects upon the island had been deplorable. The Crown had been appointing Governors to carry on for the precious Third Admiral, and continued to do so for years, until the hollow Columbus proprietorship was canceled. But colonists were dubious about settling on a "private estate," whose owner might suddenly assert his claim and inform them that they were tenants. Jamaica at the end of the Sixteenth Century was less developed than even Puerto Rico.

It should be mentioned *en passant* that when the Columbus compromise was ratified in 1540, the bones of both the First and Second Admirals were removed from Spain and buried side by side in the Cathedral at Santo Domingo. A bizarre controversy resulted long afterward, when the Spaniards shifted the coffin containing Diego's remains to Havana under the impression that it was that of Christopher Columbus.

Florida was making fair progress as a Spanish colony in 1600, but its western reaches—the fertile coast of the Gulf of Mexico, tapped by the Mississippi—had remained untouched. All of Mexico as we know it had been surveyed if not occupied, and explorers had pierced northward to California and the heart of the continent. Yucatan was still unconquered, except on the seaboard. Central America amounted to the flourishing settlements on the Guatemala plateau, the city of Granada and adjacent plantations on Lake Nicaragua, a few ports on the shores of El Salvador and Honduras. The rugged mountains of this section, clothed with primeval forests, defied the Spaniards for

generations. The coastal marshlands to the south of Cape Gracias a Dios were left to the Mosquito Indians.

A good start had been made in opening the beautiful uplands of Costa Rica, where the original capital, Cartago, was built. But the rest of the then province of Panama exhibited a specialization which has prevailed to modern times. The Isthmus was the feature that gave it wealth and consequence, so everything was consolidated at the fifty-mile neck of the Isthmus. The jungle lay on either side of a colonized strip which had not broadened in half a century.

The Spanish Main swiftly acquired its permanent character after the charter to the Welsers, Augsburg banking firm, was revoked in 1556. Spreading from the purely Iberian settlements at the mouth of the Magdalena River, pioneers brought the Venezuelan littoral under control and invaded the tiers of valleys that ran so curiously parallel to the coast. In 1560, the Guaire Valley was subdued by Francisco Fajardo. A more renowned man, Don Diego de Losada, then received a commission to pacify all the aborigines within striking distance of the sea. He chose the vale of Caracas as headquarters, crushed the Indians there and in 1567 founded the capital of Venezuela under the name of Santiago de León de Caracas. Like many other early American cities, it was unable to bear the weight of Santiago, and especially of Santiago de León. The simple geographical appellation of Indian origin prevailed. In 1571, Maracaibo was established near the mouth of the great lagoon.

While this durable work was being done, the restless souls in half of Spanish-America, but particularly in Peru, Ecuador and Nueva Granada, were chasing the mirage of El Dorado with astonishing ardor. They now called the land Manoa, and they had several mythical names for its lord. Jiménez de Quesada himself, conquistador and founder of Bogotá, had made it a lifework. It was the stimulus that caused Francisco de Orellana to follow the Amazon from near its source to the ocean, and for Lope de Aguirre similarly to chart the Orinoco.

When Quesada died in 1579, he left all his property in Nueva Granada to his niece and her husband, Antonio de Berrio, with the injunction that they use it to continue the quest for the "secret lake" and the "golden city." Berrio was then sixty years old, but he was fired by the romantic legacy. He intrigued until he got one of those vague commissions the Spanish King saw no harm in issuing, appointing the explorer Governor if and when he should discover the lands he said existed. The island of Trinidad, however, was thrown in, the authority of Spain there having become attenuated to the vanishing point. After a series of perilous efforts on and about the Orinoco, Berrio went to

Trinidad, resettled it and fixed his base at San José in the foothills. Sir Walter Raleigh captured him there in 1595, as has already been told. He was subsequently freed—only to perish, following his trail that had no end.

Berrio's was the last Spanish attempt on a large scale to find El Dorado. Twenty years later, Raleigh himself came back, to give by his debacle the finishing blow to the illusion. But that was a seventeenth-century event, which had Caribbean implications of more moment than the hunt for the Gilded Man.

Modern American historians tend to be apologists for the Spanish colonial system, and particularly for the early phase which ended with the death of Philip II in 1598. They confuse the frigid rapacity of the executive machine with the legendary exploits of the conquistadores from whom it was taken over. If it be a good system to treat colonies as closed preserves, run for the benefit of the "mother country" (save the mark!), with complete disregard of the rights of the natives and open contempt for the children born to Spaniards in the colonies, then the system was worthy of praise. From another point of view, if it be a good system to load territorial possessions with such disabilities that a passionate nationalism and loathing of the oppressors are infallibly bred, then this one was excellent indeed. Virtually all the high offices were reserved for Spaniards from Spain. Unless he were a professional sycophant—and there were many of them—the creole looked upon his imported Government as hostile to him, though better than a foreign enemy. The staggering financial burden imposed by a parasitical and obscurantist Church did not help matters.

The laws framed by the Council of the Indies not only restricted the colonies to trading with Spain, and through specified ports, but forbade them to do business with one another. Cuba might not sell hides to Panama, for example. The deal had to be handled by a merchant in Spain, as middleman. The cultivation of the vine was prohibited in the Americas by a statute of 1595, so as to compel the purchase of Spanish wine. Any form of manufacturing which could compete with the same industry in Spain was forbidden. Imposts of every description, including a ten-per-cent sales tax, had been raised to such figures that by the end of the Sixteenth Century goods cost from three to ten times more in the colonies than they did in Spain.

Emigration to the New World was strictly confined to those who could prove that their Catholicism had been of several generations. Through the medium of the Inquisition, writes Charles Edward Chapman, from whose valuable work, *Colonial Hispanic America*, a number

of the facts in this chapter are drawn, a close censorship was "maintained against the entry of foreign ideas, especially those which might weaken the faith of the King's subjects in the Americas. It did not take a great deal to have a book included in the forbidden list, and the agents of the Inquisition might enter a person's house at any hour of the day or night to look for such volumes. Comparatively few books were allowed to circulate in the colonies which did not at least have a religious tinge of the approved orthodox type, and printing was not encouraged."

Nevertheless, universities were established at an early date, the patents for Mexico and Lima, the first two, being issued in 1551. The King guaranteed them the same privileges as the University of Salamanca. Theology was to be the chief subject taught, with some attention given to medicine, law and languages. But their curricula broadened from generation to generation. The universities were Spain's best cultural gift to her colonies during the Sixteenth Century.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE CHALLENGE GROWS SERIOUS

AT THE outset of the Seventeenth Century, there occurred two parallel movements which served to break Spain's monopoly in the Caribbean. One was peculiar to that century, the other lasting. They were the rise of the buccaneers and the invasion of the Lesser Antilles by various European nations. The movements often overlapped, yet cannot conveniently be treated together until we reach the later phase when buccaneering merged with power politics. Formal colonization did not take place so soon as the seizure of footholds by the freebooters, but the impulse manifested itself earlier and it should be given priority here.

The Spaniards had persisted in shirking the military imperative of occupying and making defensible the small islands between Puerto Rico and Trinidad. It is no wonder that they did not think them worth settling, for they had limitless fertile territory to choose from elsewhere. But the score of channels from the Atlantic should have been guarded, while lack of knowledge of the very nature of the islands rendered it difficult to combat intruders. The Lesser Antilles had practically been left to the Caribs, who thus were saved from destruction for more than a hundred years. Ironically, this war-like people, halted midway of their conquest of the doomed Arawâks, were now to fall, too, but not as victims of the Spaniards. The latter had landed at a few points, notably Antigua and Martinique, and had got the worst of it. The way was left clear for nemesis in the form of men from northern Europe, and as a matter of fact the Caribs escaped complete extermination.

In April, 1605, Sir Olive Leigh with sixty-seven adventurers aboard his bark, *Olive Blossom*, came upon Barbados which he found to be uninhabited. He landed and affixed a placard to a tree, claiming the island for King James I of England. The gently undulating landscape, the white coral beaches, of this least mountainous of the chain did not prove sufficiently alluring, and Sir Olive went on to St. Lucia, where he attempted a colony. He may well have been delighted with the scenery, for the harbor was deep and safe, enclosed by hills, and peaks like verdant cones soared in the background to a height of 3,000 feet. The Caribs of St. Lucia, however, were man-eating, aggressive.



They attacked the English to such effect that within a month the handful of survivors, perhaps twenty, fled in the *Olive Blossom*, to return no more.

Though the bearing on a history of the Caribbean is slight, it should be noted that in 1607 the first permanent English settlement in America was made at Jamestown, Virginia. More pertinently, between 1609 and 1619, the savage coast southeast of the delta of the Orinoco became the scene of English, French and Dutch ventures, and forts were built. The Guiana colonies of the future had their beginnings at this early date in a section claimed by both Spain and Portugal, but never actually held by either of them. The excuse was a clause in the truce of 1609 between Spain and the newly emancipated Netherlands, which gave the Dutch free trading for nine years in American territory which Spain had not yet organized. This privilege did not extend to the English and French, but was asserted by them.

Sir Walter Raleigh reappeared on the Orinoco in 1617, to press the final great search for El Dorado. He dreamed of emerging with so much rainbow gold that his reputed treason against the Crown would be forgotten. Instead he lost his son in battle with the Spaniards, most of his equipment and eventually his head on the block in the Tower of London. He had stopped en route at St. Croix and St. Kitts in the Lesser Antilles, however, and the reports he made on the desirability of owning those islands did much to sway Britannic opinion.

There ensued an era of grants and chartered companies. England, France and Holland had no shadow of right, as law went in those days, to Caribbean islands, and any "grants" save those made by the King of Spain were tantamount to bellicose incitements. It should not be overlooked that a state of war was perpetual, due to the convention of there being "no peace beyond the Line." The Treaty of Vervins between France and Spain in 1598 had contained a secret article, which provided that hostilities need not cease south of the Tropic of Cancer and west of the meridian of the Azores. Other nations heard of this compromise and adopted it in their own relations with Spain. It was unwritten law during most of the Seventeenth Century.

The Dutch West India Company dates from 1621. It was designed to carry on the interloping for which the Spanish concession of 1609, lately expired, had been the opening wedge. A few years afterward, French rivals in the field persuaded Cardinal Richelieu to incorporate a French West India Company. The English talked about a similar idea, but muddled along without it for a while in their usual fashion.

In 1623, Sir Thomas Warner landed on St. Kitts with settlers and

plantation tools. Because he managed to stay there for a few years and because the English got it in the long run, the island calls itself "Mother of the British West Indies." Its ranking on that score could be disputed by St. Lucia. The title belongs to Barbados, which was the first claimed, and which once it had been colonized remained under the same flag without a single interruption.

Warner had trouble from the start with the Caribs. In 1625, he agreed to let the French have half the island, which enabled the combined forces to deal roughly with the savages. He acquired Nevis. The same year, the English and Dutch divided St. Croix, and Sir William Courteen planted forty colonists and eight Negro slaves on Barbados.

But in 1627, King James I made his famous "grant of all the Caribbees" to the Earl of Carlisle, proscribing but by no means halting the men already on the scene. The Earl sent an agent to Barbados, a deal that met with a success unequaled in the Americas. No foreign foe contested it. Through the many wars and bitter competition in the Caribbean for scraps of land, no matter how small, Barbados was never invaded. The island does not figure in world history. It had a phenomenal increase in population, which gave it 30,000 inhabitants by 1650 and ended by making it one of the most densely crowded spots on earth.

Other ventures did not have this immunity. In 1629, the Spaniards, stung to action by the waxing threat of foreign domination in the Lesser Antilles, broke up the settlements on St. Kitts and Nevis, including one of buccaneers. Sir Thomas Warner was in England. He came back and stubbornly revived his colony, then moved to near-by Antigua in 1632. His struggles with the Caribs were incessant. The latter had grasped the idea that their tenure of the islands was in peril. With an initiative not shown by the softer Arawâks, except under Hatuey in Cuba, the Caribs operated as a unit in the archipelago, mobilizing war canoes from distant points for raids on the whites. On one occasion, they kidnaped Sir Thomas' wife in Antigua and took her to Dominica. The Governor went in hot pursuit and recaptured her unharmed.

The Dutch then established trading stations on Curaçao off the Venezuelan coast and St. Eustatius close to St. Kitts. They made these accessions stick, mainly because they conducted them as open marts where the Spaniards themselves were not averse to trading. But during the same period (1632-34) the Netherlands essayed a foothold on Tobago, near Trinidad, which proved less fortunate. In contrast to

Barbados, the unmolested, Tobago is the Caribbean island which changed hands most frequently—twenty times in three centuries. The Dutch found traces of a feeble English plantation, destroyed in a massacre, and before many weeks had passed they were themselves extirpated by the Caribs incited by Spaniards from Trinidad. The Duchy of Courland, a small state on the Baltic, thereupon made its only appearance in Caribbean annals by founding a settlement on Tobago. This endured for a few years.

French expansionist policy was fully as energetic as that of the English, and it obtained larger immediate results in the Lesser Antilles. The choice islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, at the bend in the chain which mariners preferred as the channel for reaching the inland Sea from the Atlantic, were taken in 1635. Here was first manifested the French talent for giving a tropical holding a sense of oneness with France, and imparting the culture of the masters to aborigines, even to slaves. More will be said about this at the juncture where the results obtained by England and Spain were seen to have fixed a very different pattern for most of the peoples of the Caribbean.

In 1635, the French plan of conquest embraced the whole group now known as the Windward Islands; that is to say, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada. Carib warriors thronged all of them, but whereas the subjugation of Guadeloupe and Martinique was resolutely pressed and the natives killed, expelled or tamed, the problem of bringing in colonists to exploit the land deterred the French from being equally energetic in the other islands. They sent a small expedition to St. Lucia in 1635 and won a foothold which they did not retain for long. Their desultory attacks on Dominica, spectacularly mountainous and the chief Carib fastness, were repulsed bloodily. St. Vincent and Grenada were ignored for a little, and penetration never was easy. The English also claimed these Windward Islands. European peace treaties caused them to be shuttled back and forth between the two nations.

It is highly suggestive, therefore, that to this day Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada bear a Gallic stamp which generations of definitive English rule have not eradicated. Overlapping of customs explains it only in part. There is, among the colored inhabitants, a subconscious drift toward the ways of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The sum total of politico-military invasion of the Lesser Antilles during the second quarter of the Seventeenth Century rendered the Spanish title a dead letter. Not one of the small islands was ever actually ruled by the country that had discovered it, and the

Greater Antilles were shortly to be encroached upon. A major effort by Spain to prevent this would probably have been successful, would have extended her control of the Caribbean for a hundred years and put her in a better position to defend her holdings in the southern part of North America. But the weak successors of Philip II were incapable of making it.

Meanwhile, the period had been marked by two extraordinary happenings in other parts of the Sea. The first, long drawn out, was an attempt by English Puritans to nurture a colony foredoomed to failure. The second, oddly forgotten, was the looting of a plate fleet after the prettiest running fight that had yet been staged in those waters.

About two-thirds of the distance between Jamaica and Panama there is an island four miles long by three wide, an outcropping of linked mountain peaks cast up by volcanic action in prehistoric times, with an extreme elevation of 1,200 feet. The soil of its valleys is unusually fertile. But the only way of landing there is at an open roadstead lashed by breakers. The original Spanish name was Santa Catalina. A still smaller island sixty miles to the south was called San Andrés. So long as no one else wanted them, they were negligible to the Spaniards, who left them uninhabited. But in the hands of a hostile power they could be a serious threat to the ports of the Isthmus. They were the ocean outposts nearest to the Gold Road.

At some date prior to 1625, English rovers visited the two islands and rechristened them Providence and Henrietta. On the report taken back to London, a company was formed to exploit them. The stockholders were all prominent members of the Puritan sect, which was not finding life easy under the Stuarts. The success of the colony established on Massachusetts Bay in 1620 was doubted. Suddenly enamored of the notion of a tropical paradise, the group in question sent out the two-hundred-ton ship *Sea Flower* with ninety men and boys, and presently re-enforced them with eighty from Bermuda. They made a fair start as planters on the larger island, Providence, were apparently overlooked by the Spaniards, and their numbers grew.

By 1635 there were 540 whites in the colony, mostly English, including forty women and children. But there were also nearly one hundred Negro slaves, a concession to the ways of Belial which some of the long-faced backers in England did not approve, but to which others had agreed as a "necessity." That year, the Spaniards became incensed at the brisk trading that had sprung up between Providence and the Mosquito Indians of the Nicaragua coast. An expedition was sent from Cartagena to erase the Puritans. The purely defensive strength of the

island was then demonstrated, for the Spanish ships could find no landing among the rocks, and at the end of five days were beaten off "considerably torn" by cannon fire.

A second Spanish attack failed in 1640. The colonists developed a huge conceit, imagined that their isolated speck of land could always defeat the enemy and grow rich. They were doing business now with Boston, Salem and other New England ports. They invited immigration from the inhospitable North, as they termed it, and early in 1641 a boatload of New England Puritans started for Providence. The latter were fortunate in arriving a bit late, for Admiral Diaz Pimienta left Cartagena in May with eleven ships and 1,400 men, reduced the island as elaborately as though it had been a great fortress and transported the English who survived to Spain. The hopefuls from Salem were turned back by a Spanish salvo on June 6, 1641, and that was the end of an episode. Providence, under other auspices, was soon to regain its abnormal importance.

The victory over the plate fleet was a Dutch affair and easily the most brilliant coup achieved by that people in the Caribbean. Their West India Company had adopted a belligerent policy when hostilities between Spain and the Netherlands were resumed in the 1620's. Snatching an island here and there had been incidental. Flotillas of veritable warships, authorized by the Dutch Republic and largely manned by former "Beggars of the Sea" (naval irregulars of the recent wars of independence), raked Spanish colonial ports in both Americas. A salient feat was the sacking of San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1625, by the Burgomaster of Edam, Bowdoin Hendricks. The Spaniards called him Enrico.

In 1628, two of the ablest Dutch admirals were sent to lurk off Havana, with the object of capturing the autumn plate fleet. They were Pieter Pieterszoon Heyn with thirty-one vessels, and Pieter Adriaanszoon Ita with twelve. Heyn was a popular hero. In his youth he had been twice condemned to the galleys by the Spaniards, the first time with his own father as bench-mate. Freed in exchanges of prisoners, he had quickly risen to high command and had avenged himself on the foe in all parts of the known world.

Trying to snare a plate fleet was a favorite game of the privateers from northern Europe. Drake had hoped for such a prize in vain. This time the quarry sailed from Vera Cruz directly into the trap, and its Admiral, Juan de Benavides, permitted himself to be hopelessly outmaneuvered by Heyn. Dutch scouts had reported the Spaniards to be off Cape San Antonio at the end of August. Instead of advancing into

the wind that was blowing from the west, Heyn withdrew to a point between Havana and Matanzas. He allowed the plate fleet to be carried around the curve of Cuba by the Gulf Stream and the following wind, then struck it obliquely behind its center and ran along with it, stringing out his ships and forcing the Spaniards toward the coast. Fierce encounters took place between individual vessels. Captain Cornelius de Witt overpowered one galleon at sea. Benavides committed the error of bolting for Matanzas Bay. Heyn encouraged him to disorganize his fleet into a jostling mass, then herded the ships on to the beaches, within the harbor and outside it. Plunder valued at 15,000,000 guilders was taken, and that year the Dutch West India Company declared a fifty-per-cent dividend.

Worthy of note as one of the last "official" raids of the period was the cruise of Captain William Jackson, who sailed in 1642 with a commission bearing the Great Seal of England. He had three ships and about 1,100 men. After combing the Spanish Main, looting Maracaibo and passing on to the Honduras coast, he struck at Jamaica. Villa de la Vega was seized after a stiff fight in which Jackson lost forty men. He ransomed the city for 7,000 pieces of eight, 10,000 loaves of cassava bread and 200 cattle. The beauty and fertility of Jamaica so charmed many of the English, according to the Sloane MSS, that twenty-three (presumably Catholics) deserted in one night to the Spaniards.

The "unofficial" phase of buccaneering was then approaching its climax. Caribbean history furnishes no stranger tale.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE RISE OF THE BUCCANEERS

Loose writing by the romancers has confused the difference between privateers, buccaneers and pirates. It is true that all three were piratical. But the first two had varying conceptions of nationalism, while the last were robbers pure and simple, men of a type that has been present from the dawn of history. The motives and methods that distinguished privateers from buccaneers, however, are well worth studying, because the buccaneers were unique products of Caribbean conditions and exercised a permanent influence.

Let us take Sir Francis Drake as the ideal privateer. He obtained the sanction of his monarch for raids on Spanish possessions, equipped his own vessels, enlisted his entire force in England and brought his loot to that country. His mission was to injure the enemy and enrich himself and company, with a "cut" for the Queen when she had money in the venture, as she usually did. Afterward, Drake commanded royal warships, took part in major battles, held cities to ransom and otherwise mulcted the Spaniard wherever he could find him. But while he paved the way for British imperialism, he was consistently the insular Englishman, leading his countrymen on forays, never the colonizer. The same was true of the other great privateers, French and Dutch as well as English.

The buccaneers, on the other hand, began as ruthless individualists from many nations, who had decided to settle in Spanish territory. From defending their precarious footholds, they passed to the aggressive at sea, where their initial acts were sheer piracy. Remote islands became their headquarters. They soon tended to coalesce in national groups, though these often worked together under a supreme admiral. The more farsighted captains reserved the right to exempt ships of their own nation from attack. This made it easy for northern maritime powers acquiring colonies to draft the buccaneers, to whom they issued letters of marque and converted into privateers, especially in time of war. Thereby they utilized men who had already adopted the region and who zealously forwarded the cause of wresting territory from Spain. Eventually they were absorbed by the colonial system, except for their worst elements which relapsed into piracy.

The writer, a few years ago, sketched the rise of the buccaneers in his biography of Sir Henry Morgan. Substantially the same text, condensed but with new facts interpolated, constitutes the remainder of this chapter.

Some time prior to 1620—it is impossible to be exact about the date—adventurers began to drift singly, or in small groups, into the north-western tip of Hispaniola, which had become practically depopulated by emigration to the mainland. The majority of the newcomers were fugitives, proscribed Catholics from England, Huguenots from France and Lutherans from Holland, many Irish and Welsh, political refugees from various countries, and not a few criminals. They found the woods and deserted savannas overrun with domestic animals gone wild, the descendants of beasts introduced by the Spaniards. It was easy for the adventurers to support themselves by hunting. They seem to have had no taste for agriculture, and indeed their doubtful hold upon the coast would have made homesteading a rash undertaking. The killing of beasts and the curing of the flesh became their sole occupation.

They learned from Arawâk half-breeds the following method of smoking beef and pork: The meat was cut into long strips, salted and wrapped loosely around a green rod, which was placed across two forked sticks, so that it could be manipulated as a turnspit. Underneath was lighted a wood fire, into which animal fats were thrown at intervals. This created a thick, pungent smoke, which quickly preserved the meat. The latter turned red, like ham or corned beef, was peculiarly savory, and although not salted would keep for several weeks.

This sort of smoked meat had been called by the Indians *boucan*. The verb *boucaner* was coined in French to describe the process. The white hunters who practiced it on a large scale inevitably became *boucaniers*, or in English buccaneers.

Their social organization was communistic. The private ownership of property was forbidden among them. To be absolutely free, they foreswore marriage and the rearing of families. They lived in pairs or in groups up to five, the members of such households calling each other *matelots* (sailors), meaning companions. A man's *matelot* stood hard by him in battle and nursed him in times of sickness. It was considered preferable to having a wife. Native concubines were temporary and kept at a distance. Should a hunter succumb, as occasionally happened, to the weakness of setting up housekeeping with a woman, he was ejected from the society of buccaneers.

They hunted with dogs of a Spanish breed run wild, which they had half tamed. They carried knives and a powder horn in their



belts, bullets in their pockets. Their great muskets were charged with balls that ran sixteen to the pound. These weapons, broad-butted, long-barreled, and with a tremendous kick, were made by the gunsmiths Brachère of Dieppe and Galin of Nantes. The type became known as the buccaneer musket, the only one that the chasseurs of Hispaniola and their successors would use.

Romantic engravings of the period notwithstanding, the outlaws were thickly bearded. They adopted a uniform dress, consisting of a coarse shirt belted on the outside above short trousers, rawhide shoes and a Spanish hat with the brim cropped except in front, where it shaded their eyes. Their clothing was habitually soaked with animal blood to a point which caused an early observer to remark that it seemed stiff and blackened, as if with tar.

For a long time no one disturbed them. The Spaniards were sluggish, because the numbers of the trespassers were few. But the latter's *boucan* was super-excellent, and its fame spread. Ships began to send boats ashore to get supplies of it. A system of barter flourished, enabling the hunters to solve the serious problem of keeping themselves armed with muskets and ammunition from France. The trade expanded, and the pioneers, who were attracting recruits at a fast rate, occupied the whole northern peninsula of what is now Haiti, with markets at Port-de-Paix, Port Margot, Cap Français and Leogane.

Close to the northwestern shore of Hispaniola lies the small rocky island of Tortuga. The cliffs on its northern side are so steep that the French called it the Côte-de-Fer. The only mooring place on the southern side is a roadstead protected from wind and high seas by Hispaniola itself. Tortuga is known in history as the buccaneers' island, but except at short intervals it was not ruled by them. The French and English alternated in attempts to hold it as a colony—a frankly unmoral colony which catered to freebooters of every description.

The chasseurs of the mainland ventured to Tortuga in the early 1620's, finding it uninhabited. They were interested in the wild hogs which abounded there. We hear of buccaneers having been present on St. Kitts after the English and French had divided that island. When the Spaniards crushed the St. Kitts and Nevis settlements in 1629, it is certain that these buccaneers persuaded many of the disheartened survivors to go with them to Tortuga, which then had its formal start as an English colony under Anthony Hilton, the ejected Governor of Nevis.

Meanwhile, the authorities of Hispaniola had begun to take cognizance of the meat-hunters and to shoot them at sight. Several puni-



The Caribbean of the Buccaneers

tive expeditions were sent from Santo Domingo, failed to root them out, but broke up some of their trading ports. Then the Spaniards decided to kill the cattle and hogs wholesale, as a measure to cause starvation. They beat the woods and the savannas in great drives, which left the landscape reeking with the carcasses of perhaps half the game on the island. This policy irked the buccaneers, but did not defeat them. They rallied about Tortuga. Its harbor became the base of the Brethren of the Coast, as they were now beginning to call themselves. They returned here from their foraging on the mainland, bringing less and less *boucan* and more plunder. A semi-maritime life had been forced upon them. They were the owners of boats, and it would not have needed a particularly shrewd prophet to foresee the next stage in their development.

Between the Spaniards and themselves war to the hilt, war without respite, was accepted as a vendetta to be handed down from generation to generation. Both sides practiced frightful cruelties. Having no possible credit of future good will, they might as well take the cash. What more natural than that the buccaneers should extend their attacks to Spanish ships? Adopting by instinct the technique of all corsairs, the Brethren built small, low-lying, fast vessels, usually of cedar wood. They preferred barks, which were vessels of one mast and with trian-

gular sails. They would maneuver to get into the wake of an intended victim, where they would be safe from broadsides and offer as narrow a target as possible to the guns in the stern. Then they would throw off their mask of innocence and speed to the assault. Their reliance for the finale was on grappling irons, boarding parties that knew no fear, a body-to-body slaughter with cutlass and pistol.

They took it for granted that vessels immensely larger than their own were no match for them. C. H. Haring, most thorough of research workers in this field, explains that the Spanish ships of the Seventeenth Century were notoriously clumsy and unseaworthy. Their towering poops and forecastles made them look like mansions that had gone asailing, and their short keels under these weighty superstructures responded so slowly to the tiller that the ludicrous first impression was largely justified.

Some not unwieldy ships were captured, however. As the corsairs grew bolder and more experienced, they would take these over for piratical purposes. At times they controlled a fair-sized fleet, though the losses by warfare and storms were too heavy to permit the mobilization of such an establishment to be in any sense predictable.

They discovered new hiding places, notably in the Gulf of Honduras and along the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua, sections of Central America where Spanish rule scarcely existed. "In the creeks, lagoons and river mouths densely shrouded by tropical foliage," writes Haring, "they were able to careen and refit their vessels, divide their booty, and enjoy a respite from their sea-forays." Ruatan, largest of the Bay islands, and the mouth of the Belize River, were held briefly.

In 1634, the Spaniards descended on Tortuga and drove out all the English and French they found there. The settlement revived the moment they were gone, but had its difficulties until the able French colonial official, Levasseur, arrived in 1640, repulsed a new Spanish attack and instituted a governorship that was to last for twelve years. He was consistently a patron of free trade.

Also in 1640, buccaneer development took a long forward step. The naval exploits of the rovers had been, until that year, more or less accidental in character and dependent on the inspiration of some minor leader. The Confederacy of the Brethren of the Coast was now formed with a reasonably strict discipline and a co-ordinated policy. Their activities enriched Tortuga.

The Spaniards strove against this in spasms, but without much to show for it until January, 1654, when a force more competently led than usual expelled the Chevalier de Fontenay, successor of Levasseur,

and all his French and English adherents. The place was systematically devastated and a small garrison left to hold the fort and prevent a reoccupation.

We cannot tell whether—barring further large-scale aggression from Europe—the coup would have been potent to strangle buccaneering. The corsairs might or might not have been able to set up new headquarters as effective as Tortuga. But the Penn-Venables expedition arrived from England a year later, to conquer Jamaica and maintain that important island like a fist thrust deeply into the Spanish domain. Upon learning of the mere approach of the expedition, the Governor of Hispaniola ordered the garrison at Tortuga to blow up the fort, bury the cannon and other arms, and come to his assistance. His fears were not chimerical. The little island shaped like a turtle's back was lost forever, while Port Royal, Jamaica, would soon become the supreme threat to Spain in the Caribbean.

Tortuga had one more English overlord, the quaint Elias Watts, who invited the buccaneers to return from their woodland haunts in Hispaniola, the desolate bays where their boats were rotting, and enjoy the advantages of a government that had no prejudices so long as there were profits to be made. He lasted for five years, then yielded without a blow to the Frenchman, Du Rausset, put his family and enormous gains aboard a ship and migrated to New England.

Du Rausset and his nephew, the *Sieur de la Place*, ruled Tortuga in turns until 1665, when Louis XIV appointed Bertrand d'Ogeron Governor. The latter proved to be a shrewd administrator and a creator of French colonial power in the Antilles. He gained his ends by working with the buccaneers, stimulating the growth of the Confederacy and encouraging them to embark on ever more ambitious projects. He did not care what villainies they practiced afloat, so long as they obeyed him in Tortuga.

All the great buccaneer captains passed through the school of Tortuga. The forming of the Confederacy made their careers possible. Few survived leadership for more than a year or two.

There was Pierre le Grand, naturally called by the English Peter the Great. He spread consternation by creeping up on a warship, boarding her and taking the officers at the pistol's point as they played cards, without having lost one of his twenty-eight men. Thereafter, he was forced to pay with blood for his prizes. But he passed swiftly from the picture, some said to die peacefully in France.

Montbars, known as the Exterminator, was a French gentleman of Languedoc actuated more by wrath against the monstrosities committed

by the Spaniards in the name of religion than by a desire for gain. He proved his sincerity, if nothing else, by leaving most of the plunder to his men. His sword was dedicated to the God of Vengeance, and captives taken by him were infallibly put to death, sometimes with pains which he sought to make more terrible than any the Holy Inquisition had devised. He had a private base on the islet of St. Bartholomew, near the Virgins. Montbars vanished with his ship at sea, his fate unaccounted for even by rumors.

Roche Brasiliano owed his *nom-de-guerre* to the fact that he had lived for a long time in Brazil. He was really a Dutchman, a courageous and ruthless brute, famed for his exploits against long odds. He too, was given to cruel reprisals, his favorite method being to roast his Spanish prisoners on spits. Another sea-wolf with an alias was Bartolomeo Portugués. He boasted of his birth in Portugal, but his true name remains a mystery. Remarkable escapes were his forte. Once he slipped overboard, carrying with him two huge earthen wine jugs. These he embraced in such a fashion that their open mouths remained above the surface, and being hollow they floated him ashore. Oddly enough, the villain could not swim. On another occasion, he absconded with the ship in which he had been held captive.

That cadaverous, somber and altogether vile being, l'Olonnois, was nevertheless a buccaneer captain of the first order of talent. He was born Jean David Nau, at Sable d'Olonne, France, but preferred to be called l'Olonnois, "the native of Olonne." His campaigns were large in conception and generally fruitful. Aided by Michel le Basque, he sacked Maracaibo. For cruelty, his claim to the championship rests undisputed. The man was a sadist. Beside him Montbars was virtuous, because the Exterminator inflicted torments as a castigation, while l'Olonnois practiced murder and torture for the fiendish pleasure they gave himself. When he had the leisure only to kill, he would decapitate prisoners one after the other with his saber and lick the blade after each stroke. On the Central American coast, he slashed open the breast of a prisoner whose answers had displeased him, tore out the heart and gnawed at it before he dashed it to the ground. It is not astonishing that when he was ambushed by Indians shortly after the last mentioned incident, they cut his living body into a thousand pieces.

And finally there was Henry Morgan, who strode a broader stage than any of these.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### JAMAICA SEIZED BY THE ENGLISH

THE capture and annexation of Jamaica during the regime of the Lord Protector Cromwell was an afterthought, resulting from the miscarriage of a far more ambitious scheme. Yet the logic of circumstances made it the project that should have been conceived in the first place. Jamaica was lightly held by the Spaniards, for although the Columbus proprietorship had lapsed, lost ground in the matter of immigration had not been regained. The number of white residents has been estimated at only 1,500 (this count probably applied to males) with twice that many Negro slaves and a few bands of Cimarrones, or wild men, chiefly the descendants of fugitive slaves who had mated with Arawâk women.

Jamaica could easily be cleared of its few Spaniards and a fresh start made. Its 4,500 square miles of rich land constituted an ideal tropical holding for England just then. A larger colony with a hostile population would have been hard to settle. Jamaica, indeed, strategically placed in the Greater Antilles, was one of two available prizes, the other being the western end of Hispaniola on which France had a grip. From maritime England's viewpoint, Jamaica was preferable because it was an insular unit which her ships could defend.

Oliver Cromwell, however, was possessed by the idea that he could banish Spain from the Americas and substitute a Puritan empire for the Catholicism he detested so heartily. He called it his Western Design and justified it in austere biblical language which somehow missed the realities of the case. Most historians credit the ex-Dominican friar of English birth, Thomas Gage, with the largest influence in turning the Protector's attention to the Caribbean. Gage had been sent by his Order to the Indies at an early age. He had been in Cartagena, Porto Bello, and for years in Mexico. Suddenly abandoning his priestly career, he returned to England in 1641, joined the Puritans and published a book seven years later, entitled *The English-American, or a New Survey of the West-India's*. In this sprightly work, he inveighed against "Popish idolatries," and at the same time described the Spanish colonies as rolling in wealth, but so incompetently governed that they would be easy to seize.

Cromwell assuredly was impressed, for he exchanged letters with

Gage. Certain New England worthies, including John Cotton and Roger Williams, wrote the Protector that it was his duty to smite the Church of Rome in America. Directly from the West Indies came the advice of Thomas Modyford, a great sugar planter and member of the Council in Barbados, who urged the capture of Trinidad and the Orinoco country. Modyford was a cousin of George Monck, the Parliamentary General, a connection that served him excellently with Cromwell and with the Restoration which Monck engineered.

The upshot of all this wishful thinking was the expedition organized in 1654 under the joint command of Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables. The latter's name is usually placed second, but he was given slightly more authority than the Admiral. The thirty-eight ships provided were fairly stout craft. The 2,500 soldiers placed aboard them were the scum of the old Roundhead Army, mostly London slum-rats who had been marked for dismissal. England probably never sent out a more disreputable force to effect a conquest. Thomas Gage himself accompanied it as a Protestant chaplain.

The instructions given Venables did not bind him to any precise plan. He had been told that it might be well to seize Hispaniola or Puerto Rico, or both, after which either Cartagena or Havana should be reduced, in order to dominate the route of one of the plate fleets and achieve a quick haul of treasure. Alternative tactics were to strike first at any point on the Spanish Main that seemed weak, and thence to close in on Cartagena. Venables was to make his decision at Barbados, after he had consulted with Penn and local experts.

The fleet arrived at Barbados in January, 1655. At once, by prearrangement, volunteers were enlisted there to the number of about three thousand. They were a motley gang, including sugar planters who had been forced out of the business by stronger rivals, ex-bondservants, men who had been transported for crimes or for their religious beliefs, and a large quota of Royalist refugees. Barbados sympathized with the Stuart cause, and the colonists it contributed to the Penn-Venables expedition counterbalanced the Puritan riffraff from London, without, be it said, adding much to the soldierly character of the army. More than a thousand additional volunteers of a superior type presently came down from the small islands centering about St. Kitts. The rapid growth of English colonization in the Lesser Antilles is indicated by these surprising figures. When Venables was ready to move in April, he had 6,873 men, of whom 916 were officers.

Hispaniola had been chosen as the objective. The whole island was to be captured, beginning with its ancient capital, Santo Domingo. It

should have been a simple task, for the Spanish Governor, the Conde de Peñalva, commanded a garrison of only a few hundred. Venables was in ill health. He did not gain the affection or respect of his followers, because he lacked magnetism and his generalship was poor. Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania, was little better as a leader. These sorry partners proceeded to bungle miserably an affair that Drake or Morgan, with one-tenth the force, would have handled as a dress rehearsal.

Disembarking some thirty miles to the west of Santo Domingo on April 13, Venables led nearly six thousand troops, waterless, through woods and savannas concerning which his knowledge was precisely nil. His scouts did not function. On the seventeenth, he was ambushed and soundly beaten by a handful of the enemy. Penn appears deliberately to have withheld his aid, on the grounds that he did not approve the military plan. The city could have been blasted into submission by gunfire from the ships, but this was not done. Venables struggled forward until the twenty-fifth, when the Conde de Peñalva routed him. This episode is passed over in English histories for popular consumption, which specialize on the heroic deeds of Englishmen against overwhelming odds, but do not care for such happenings as Venables before the walls of Santo Domingo. Peñalva had so few men that he was unable to take many prisoners, or hamper the English in their headlong retreat to the landing place, where they re-embarked and sailed away.

General and Admiral proceeded to quarrel violently. They realized, however, that they would have to give Cromwell a victory of some kind. The fertility and undefended state of Jamaica were recalled. They took the fleet there, entering Kingston Harbor on May 10 and the next day bombarding the Pasaje fort and two other small works at the western end. The garrisons retired as soon as troops commenced to land.

Conquering Jamaica in the circumstances was a walk-over. The Spanish soldiers there did not make up a company, and the residents were poorly armed. Even so, Venables allowed himself to be outtricked. He marched to Villa de la Vega, which submitted without resistance, and proclaimed his intention of annexing the island. The terms offered the Spaniards required them to emigrate within ten days, on pain of death, and to give up all their property except wearing apparel and food sufficient for a voyage to Cuba. The negotiations were dragged out. It was discovered that the Spaniards had used the time gained to send their families and goods to the wooded north side of the island. The men, too, now took to the mountains and made a show of resistance. Before long, many had crossed to Santiago-de-Cuba, carrying their valuables with them, and the English got no plunder worth mentioning.



Admiral Penn sailed for England on June 25 with the greater part of the fleet. Venables followed nine days afterward in a lone vessel. The two incompetents were charged with having deserted their posts and were imprisoned for a month in the Tower of London.

The rank and file, unfitted as nearly all of them were to be planters, fumbled ahead with what they discovered was to be their new job, the cultivation of the soil. Fevers and dysentery took a dreadful toll among them. The simplest necessities were lacking. No provision had been made to feed them until the next crops, according to Jamaican historians, and the pioneers in numerous instances lay about the streets of the capital crying piteously for bread. These men ranted that they had come to the New World to fight Spaniards and get gold, not to farm. Some were given the action they craved when an abortive attempt was made from Cuba to recapture Jamaica. A few went on unprofitable excursions to the Main, under Vice-Admiral William Goodson, who had been left behind by Penn with twelve ships.

But the weirdly mixed elements of the expeditionary force did, for the most part, tackle the business of hammering out an agricultural colony. They were aided by recruits from New England, Virginia and Bermuda. Cromwell, after locking himself in his room for a whole day and brooding over the Santo Domingo fiasco, decided to make a success of Jamaica. He sent large re-enforcements, his Council voting among other measures to ship a thousand young men and an equal number of girls from Ireland. The Protector issued a proclamation, exempting the colonists from taxes for a period and offering inducements to trade. In 1658, three years after the conquest of Jamaica, the island was reported to have 4,500 white inhabitants and 1,500 Negro slaves.

The passion for privateering was as strong under the Protectorate as it had ever been in the days of Queen Elizabeth. The method had been rendered less fruitful by the competition of the buccaneers, that was all, and it was about to be abandoned. One more captain of the old school, Christopher Myngs, was fated nevertheless to have his moment of glory. Myngs was both resourceful and lucky. It is odd that he should have been accorded so little space in the annals of his country's navy and the romances that have been written about lawless deeds in the Caribbean.

Myngs had accompanied the Penn-Venables expedition as skipper of the *Marston Moor*, a frigate of fifty-four guns. His ship was one of those left with Goodson and had participated in the Vice-Admiral's footless raids. By 1658, he had an independent command and appears to have superseded Goodson as chief naval officer in the West Indies. He longed to give Cromwell that plate fleet which the pusillanimous Penn

had not even tried to find. It was not to be. But on April 23, 1659, he returned to Jamaica with the *Marston Moor* and two other frigates, bearing a magnificent prize.

His arrival was historic for several reasons. He had been commissioned for the voyage by Edward D'Oyley, first regular Governor of Jamaica under the English. He docked at the brand new haven of Port Royal, the "careening point" of the Spaniards at the tip of the sandspit protecting Kingston Harbor, where the English had built a town. He inaugurated that future port of orgies by landing the most valuable pillage that the place was ever to see in a single lot. It took several of Morgan's totals to equal this one.

Myngs had started by looting Cumaná, clearinghouse of the pearl fisheries at the far eastern end of the Spanish Main. He did not get much there, or at Puerto Cabello as he ranged westward. Coro, near the entrance of Maracaibo Lagoon, seemed unpromising. It was small and off the main treasure route. But Myngs went ashore with two hundred men and gave it a flailing, on general principles. He pursued the inhabitants into the woods—and stumbled upon twenty-two chests which they were attempting to hide. Each chest contained four hundred pounds of silver, marked for the King of Spain. Presumably, it was the yield of several years from some Nueva Granada mine. Myngs had looked no further. His haul, with incidental gems and cocoa, was estimated at 1,500,000 pieces of eight, the piece of eight figuring at about one dollar, but with a far greater purchasing power than the modern coin.

A nasty controversy developed over the sharing of the spoils. Myngs, accused of favoring his men at the expense of the state, was called to England to explain. But he was soon back in Jamaica, the restoration of Charles II in 1660 having in no wise affected his fortunes. The future exploits of Myngs were typical of the incertitudes of the age. King Charles, with his secret bent toward Catholicism, naturally favored Spain, and all the more so because Cromwell had been hostile to that country. One of his first acts after mounting the throne was to patch up a treaty of amity with Madrid. Did this mean peace or no peace "beyond the Line" in the Americas? London said yes, but the governing Council in Jamaica held a contrary opinion. It passed a resolution on September 12, 1662, "that men be enlisted for a design at sea with the *Centurion* and other vessels." The plan was to seize and destroy Santiago-de-Cuba, which was regarded as a menace. It was the place from which the fugitive Spanish colonists still plotted to reconquer Jamaica.

*Centurion* was the name of Myngs's new flagship. He sailed in nine days after the enabling resolution with 1,300 men, but though the dis-

tance to Santiago is only ninety miles unfavorable winds beat him back from the Cuban coast for a fortnight. Such were the vicissitudes of sail. On the night of October 5, Myngs put his men ashore at about the spot where the Americans were to land in 1898 and followed the same course past San Juan Hill to the outskirts of the city. They were opposed by barely seven hundred Spaniards under Don Cristóbal de Sasi, an ex-Governor of Jamaica. The English charged with pike and cutlass, carried the position with ease and in the next few days destroyed every fortification around the bottleneck harbor. They hurled the heavy ordnance of the Morro into the sea, used the thousand barrels of powder they found there to demolish the bastions and even to blow up near-by country houses. The thoroughness of the job was not calculated to improve Anglo-Spanish relations.

Myngs was no sooner back at Port Royal than the Council urged him to apply his technique westward. He departed the second week of January, 1663, with an increased force, battled his way through a storm and took by surprise the town of Campeche on the Yucatan peninsula. Again he smashed the defensive works to rubble, and in addition burned half the town. He collected loot worth 150,000 pieces of eight, whereas at Santiago-de-Cuba he had got little or nothing. Campeche overlooked the route of the Mexican treasure fleet, and the alarm caused was so great that the galleons refused to leave on their homeward trip from Vera Cruz for two months.

Spain was frantic about these depredations, yet accepted an apology from King Charles, accompanied by a general ban on privateering. We hear no more of Myngs. But the English had no intention of abandoning a form of irregular warfare that filled their pockets. Individual ships continued to go out with letters of marque. Buccaneers of British origin who had formerly made Tortuga their headquarters moved to Port Royal, where they were better than tolerated. Orders from London were so vague and contradictory that the local officials did about as they pleased. With sensational speed, neglected Jamaica had become a dynamic factor in the Caribbean, the center of English power there and the mecca of all the adventurous. Charles himself had warned that the Spaniards regarded it with "jealousy and offence."

In 1664, Thomas Modyford of Barbados, now Sir Thomas, was appointed Governor of Jamaica. Glad of an opportunity for a gesture that would pacify Madrid, Charles instructed Modyford to grant no letters of marque and to maintain friendly relations with the Spanish dominions. A serious attempt was made to obey this order. The following year, however, war broke out with Holland and "commissions

of reprisals upon the ships and goods" of the Dutch were authorized. Modyford acted with alacrity, sent an expedition which seized the island of St. Eustatius and employed the buccaneer admiral, Edward Mansvelt, to move against Curaçao. Almost simultaneously, General Monck, become Duke of Albemarle, wrote privately to Sir Thomas in the name of the King, advising him that he could use his own discretion in granting commissions against the Spaniards.

The vigorous Governor published his intention of doing so, and, to quote him, "an universal change there was on the faces of men and things, ships repairing, great resort of workmen and labourers to Port Royal, many returning, many debtors released out of prison."

An event which would vitally affect the future of the region was on the cards. Thomas Modyford was about to form a tacit partnership with Henry Morgan.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### SIR HENRY MORGAN

HENRY MORGAN towers above his fellows of the "sweet trade," to use the Brethren's own name for it, like a palm-bole above brushwood. He was superbly gifted as a leader, for he inspired confidence and his military talents improved with each victory. He preserved a cold, clear logic in battle. No more ruthless man ever lived. He was insensitive to cruelty when it would serve his ends, but did not revel in it like certain sadists who rose to captaincy around him. He loved wealth and luxury, drank heavily and indulged the flesh in other ways. There the resemblance between him and the ordinary freebooter stopped. Morgan had the instincts of a conqueror and an executive. Political-minded, he saw beyond crude objectives and worked to bring about the ascendancy of his people in the Caribbean region. He dreamed of being proconsul there with dictatorial powers.

Morgan was a Welshman, born too late to fight in the English Civil War, whose family had ardently supported the Stuarts. He appears to have gone to Barbados of his own free will at about twenty-two, to avoid imprisonment for brawling, or for what the Puritans amiably called "malignancy," that is to say, Royalist sympathies. However employed in Barbados—there are various legends—he ran away in a year or two, went to Tortuga during the rulership there of Elias Watts and joined the buccaneers. Shipping before the mast would have been essential to his making a career, because chieftains in that stern game were required to be expert seamen who had struggled to the top. During the next half-dozen unchronicled years, he must have fought, murdered and robbed with the worst of them. By thirty he was in command of a vessel.

In August, 1665, the month the expedition that had taken St. Eustatius returned to Jamaica, three buccaneer craft which had just plundered the city of Granada, Nicaragua, arrived at Port Royal. Their captains were Henry Morgan, John Morris and one Jackman, who had started on even terms, but had ended the voyage with Morgan the acknowledged leader. The treasure aboard was considerable enough to induce Governor Modyford to overlook the fact that the letters of marque produced had been invalid for some time. Fervid stories were told about the brilliance Morgan had displayed. He was promptly appointed Vice-Admiral of

the fleet which Mansvelt was organizing for the capture of Curaçao.

The older corsair, Mansvelt, was not the man he once had been. He sailed in January, 1666, with fifteen ships, partly blockaded Curaçao, but became discouraged at the strong defenses and withdrew. He ordered an assault, instead, upon the island of Santa Catalina (Providence). It was a strange decision, almost certainly influenced by Morgan, who wanted a base from which to operate against the Isthmus and who cared little about the war with the Dutch.

The island was cleverly invested, a landing achieved and the forts reduced with no great difficulty. On the strength of the old Puritan claim, a temporary government was set up in England's name. Men were drafted from the crews of the ships as colonists and set to planting. The defenses were restored and garrisoned. Mansvelt and Morgan then separated, the former departing on lawless errands of his own, while Morgan reported to Governor Modyford in Jamaica.

Though Sir Thomas was dissatisfied with Mansvelt for having substituted an anti-Spanish campaign for an anti-Dutch one, he accepted the result and commissioned his brother, Sir James Modyford, as Lieutenant-Governor of Providence. Morgan now made Port Royal his home, and his enterprises tended more and more to wear the mask of legality. He afterward swore falsely that he had never in his life sailed without letters of marque. The truth is, he changed his ways when he and Modyford became friends shortly after the Providence coup. Morgan was quick to see that with the backing of a Governor of Modyford's stamp, he could accomplish big things. In 1667, he was elected Admiral-in-Chief of the Confederacy of the Brethren of the Coast, thereby gaining prestige and the power to assemble predatory fleets. He always struck where there was treasure to be had. But he was careful first to get Modyford's sanction. As the more formidable personality, indeed, he played upon the Governor's belief in the offensive as the best defensive and shaped a policy for both of them.

He knew that Cromwell's ambitious Western Design was no longer practicable, if it ever had been. The new Government in England was not aggressive, and King Charles had too many ties of friendship with Catholic courts. On the other hand, Spanish morale was low, due to the recent accession to the throne of a child and the vacillating regency of the Queen Mother, Maria Anna. A series of powerful blows struck in rapid succession, Morgan felt, might so shake the colonial structure in America that Englishmen on the spot could appropriate whatever territory they wanted, within reason. The accomplished fact would be made to stick by the treaty makers. After all, Spain had not yet recognized

the annexation of Jamaica. Why not force her to disgorge even richer prizes while one was about it?

The buccaneer drew up plans for the conquest of Panama City, Porto Bello, Maracaibo, Cartagena, Vera Cruz and Havana. Learning something from the technique of Drake, but more from that of Myngs, he proposed to strip these cities bare and then to level their fortifications. Each such blow would increase the discouragement of the Spaniards, until the point was reached where their warships would not venture to give battle in the Caribbean and those of England would take the upper hand.

Morgan executed only half his program, and he sometimes ransomed fortifications instead of destroying them. It is extraordinary that he should have carried it as far as he did, for he got no help from any official except Modyford and the latter was forced to jockey continuously with the authorities to retain a free hand. That both Governor and Admiral were out to enrich themselves first need not surprise us. It was the custom of the age. But a careful reading of the record will show that the agency of the buccaneers in the 1660's—their heyday—and particularly the furious, telling strokes of Morgan, was what saved Jamaica for England. If Jamaica had been lost, the islands in the Lesser Antilles would have gone. The French and Dutch, too, probably would have been expelled from the Caribbean.

The historical importance of Morgan, therefore, derives from the circumstance that, acting with none but local means, he compelled Spain to accept the encroachment of England upon the forbidden Sea. Without intending it, he helped Bertrand d'Ogeron and Jean-Baptiste De Casse to do as much for France. Nor should it be overlooked that that paralysis of Spanish naval strength for which Morgan hoped did come about slowly, once Spain admitted to herself that she could not keep the northern nations out. Before very long, the fleets that strove for the mastery of the Caribbean were to be those of England and France.

In January, 1668, following "frequent and strong advice" that the Spaniards were preparing an expedition in Cuba to retake Jamaica, Sir Thomas Modyford commissioned Henry Morgan to visit the coasts of the neighboring island and discover if there was any truth in it. The alarm had been spread by followers of Morgan, and there can be little doubt that the Governor knew what turn the cruise would take.

Morgan got together a few of his buccaneers and repaired to Twelve League Cays, as the English called part of the Jardines de la Reina, the barrier of coral islets off the south-center of Cuba. French corsairs from Tortuga, as well as English, joined him there until he had a force of



SR. HEN. MORGAN







seven hundred. It was his intention to land in Batabanó Bay, cross the island at its narrowest point and storm Havana from the rear. Conflicting reports about the defenses of that city caused him to change his mind. He decided to march against Puerto Principe, the modern Camaguey, an inland town nearly opposite his station. For political effect, however, he first took his fleet around Cape San Antonio and passed the entrance of Havana Harbor in defile, chasing the shipping to shelter and dismaying the citizens.

He returned to the Caribbean, halted at the Isle of Pines for water, then swooped down upon the Puerto Principe shore. The advance across country was accomplished briskly and in better order than a buccaneer army had ever displayed. The town fell on Holy Thursday, March 29, after a desperate resistance of four hours. It was systematically looted, its strong places ruined. Only 50,000 pieces of eight were obtained, and "the sum being known, it caused a general grief to see such a small purchase," we are told by John Esquemeling, the buccaneer historian, who was present.

When Morgan returned to Jamaica, he was lightly reproved by Modyford for having invaded Cuba without provocation. Yet the Governor agreed to his embarking at once on a sensational enterprise, the capture of Porto Bello, sole terminus of the Gold Road since 1584.

Spring was the best time to attack Porto Bello, for although there was no fixed date the galleons from Spain arrived in May or June to load accumulated treasure. Simultaneously, a celebrated fair was held. Merchants from all over the province and from other favored places swelled the population by many thousands. The value of the merchandise handled at a single fair has been estimated at \$75,000,000. Until it ended and the ships sailed, the pack trains continued to pour in from Panama. Thomas Gage, the renegade Dominican, tells of counting in one day two hundred mules laden with bars of silver, which were stacked in the market place because the treasury was full.

Morgan left Jamaica in May with only nine sail and about five hundred fighting men, nearly all of them English. He did not disclose his destination until the mainland was sighted. Great alarm was then felt among the rank and file. The defenses of Porto Bello were among the most imposing in the Indies. The castle of San Felipe de Sotomayor at the entrance of the mile-long harbor was considered impregnable. Two other castles, San Jerónimo and Santiago de la Gloria, protected the town itself. Some of the buccaneers protested that they were too feeble a company to reduce such a place. Declining to be swayed, Morgan answered in pithy if hackneyed terms:

"The fewer persons we are, the more union and better shares we shall have in the spoil."

He did not attempt to fight his way past Sotomayor, but landed on a June evening at the mouth of a river, probably the Guanches, a few miles west. After plunging through dense woods all night, he fell upon San Jerónimo at dawn, took it by assault and fired the powder magazines. The castle was leveled as if by an earthquake, and with it there vanished its surviving defenders, whom Morgan had prudently locked in a central room. He then hastened to the investiture of La Gloria, where the leading citizens had taken refuge, carrying with them considerable treasure.

The Spaniards never defended a fortress more valiantly against the buccaneers than they did now. Their commander, Castellón, was an exceptional man, of legendary courage and no unmilitary qualms. This was the occasion on which Morgan compelled priests, monks and nuns to set scaling ladders against the walls, supposing that the devout Spanish soldiery would not fire at the cloth. Castellón ordered the ecclesiastics shot down, and it was done. Morgan led his men up, hand over hand, paying bitterly for every foot of the wall gained. He came upon the flashing sword of Castellón, who shouted, "No surrender!" and cut down several of his own soldiers who turned to flee.

The Admiral was moved to admiration, halted the attack and offered the other quarter, saying, "I do not hang such as you."

"All the Saints and His Catholic Majesty!" cried Castellón, fighting on.

It proved impossible even to take him prisoner. The attempt was made, but he defended himself too furiously. He was shot with pistols, after Morgan had given the signal reluctantly.

The sacking of Porto Bello was conducted with barbarous cruelty to individuals, who were put to the torture to force them to reveal where they had hidden their gold and jewelry. Morgan had missed both the plate fleet and the fair. The royal warehouses were practically empty. Yet he divided a prize of 250,000 pieces of eight in cash, besides precious stones, silks, linens and other merchandise, and three hundred slaves. Shares for the King and Governor Modyford came out of this. The total was very pleasing to the Port Royal merchants, who clutched most of it from the spendthrift buccaneers and reported that their remittances to London had caused Jamaica's stock to boom.

Port Royal, incidentally, had enjoyed a mushroom growth, which by 1668 had made it one of the largest and certainly the richest town on the Caribbean. That year, it contained about eight hundred houses, which

by a conservative estimate of ten persons to the house, including slaves, meant a population of eight thousand. New York at the same period had only five hundred houses. Panama, with a thousand houses, surpassed Port Royal, but it is doubtful if either Santo Domingo or Havana were so large.

Morgan's next effort was to have been the seizure of Cartagena. A royal frigate, the *Oxford*, three hundred tons and mounting thirty-six guns, had been sent to the Jamaica station and was attached by Modyford to Morgan's fleet. The latter kept rendezvous at the Isle des Vaches, off the southwestern end of Hispaniola, at the close of 1668. While plans were being discussed at a dinner aboard the *Oxford*, the frigate blew up mysteriously and 350 English sailors perished. The only officers that escaped were those seated with Morgan on one side of the table in the saloon.

The loss of this vessel and a subsequent scattering of the buccaneers on minor errands reduced Morgan's force to eight vessels with five hundred men. This was insufficient for the Cartagena venture, and he went instead to Maracaibo in March, 1669. He possessed himself of the town easily and wrung booty worth a quarter of a million pieces of eight out of its citizens and those of near-by Gibraltar. There was little treasure, for l'Olonnois had been there two years before. Morgan accepted a great many slaves. His escape from the Lagoon was more noteworthy than any other feature of the raid. Three powerful Spanish warships, under Don Alonso del Campo, had arrived to blockade the channel. The buccaneers made a *brûlot*, or fireship, which they steered against the flotilla, burning one vessel, driving another ashore, and clearing the way for them to board and take the third.

On his return to Jamaica, Morgan settled down to preliminary scheming for the grandest of his projects, Panama. If Maracaibo had been the last of him, he would have rated simply as a corsair of unusual talents. A political career for such a man would have been unthinkable. The Panama exploit called for serious naval action and a military campaign involving generalship of a high order. Drake and other captains in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries had dreamed of capturing Panama, but only Henry Morgan accomplished it. Modyford provided him with formal authority, albeit the Governor resorted to some knavish work in doing so.

Negotiations for a solid peace were progressing in Europe. The Spaniards, however, enraged by Morgan's deeds, continued to seek vengeance in the Caribbean. They had retaken Providence Island, which the English now called Old Providence to distinguish it from their new

settlement of the same name in the Bahamas. Modyford waited for a violation of Jamaican soil. This occurred in June, 1670, when a raider burned a few houses, carried off prisoners and posted a defiant notice.

Governor and Council immediately commissioned Morgan as "Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of all the ships of war belonging to this harbour," and permitted him to take whatever steps he saw fit, "which may tend to the preservation and quiet of this island, being his Majesty's chief interest in the Indies." Modyford was well aware how the commission would be used. That autumn, Morgan collected a fleet of thirty-six ships at the Isle des Vaches and an army, as armies went in those days, of two thousand men, mostly buccaneers. News of the Treaty of Madrid, signed July 8, 1670, was received by Modyford no later than November 1. It included recognition by Spain of England's sovereignty over Jamaica and other West Indian islands held by her. Nevertheless, Modyford failed to recall Morgan. He wrote London that his messenger with a copy of the articles of peace had been unable to find the Admiral, an incredible story.

On December 15, Morgan sailed for the Isthmus, stopping en route to terrorize the Spanish garrison at Old Providence into submission. The castle of San Lorenzo, at the mouth of the Chagres River, was stormed early in January, 1671, after three days' fighting, in which the buccaneers had two hundred casualties. A force of three hundred was then detached to hold it.

About the twelfth of the month (there is much confusion as to dates, because the Spanish had adopted the reformed Gregorian Calendar and the English had not), Morgan placed himself at the head of 1,400 men and began his march to the Pacific. Near the site of modern Gatún, he established a rearguard post of two hundred and drove onward with 1,200. Every natural obstacle was encountered. The marshes swarmed with noxious insects, as well as alligators and poisonous snakes. Malaria was prevalent. Due to the spoiling of food stores, the soldiers had started with virtually empty knapsacks. They found the country bare of supplies and they almost starved. Indian allies of the Spaniards flitted alongside them through the woods. It was only thirty miles to Venta Cruces on the Gold Road, but that Morgan should have taken his force, intact, to that point in six days was a prodigy.

He occupied Venta Cruces without a blow being struck. The Spaniards, under Don Juan Pérez de Guzmán, enjoyed a slight numerical advantage and had decided to rest their defense upon a pitched battle on the Matasnillo savanna outside the city of Panama. It was an error. The

buccaneers might have been successfully ambushed in the wilderness. Now it was a matter of generalship.

After a pause to feed and rest his men, Morgan advanced in perfect order and routed the Spaniards in a brilliantly conducted fight lasting two hours. The date (English style) was January 19, 1671. "We pursued the enemy so close," the Admiral stated in his official report, "that their retreat came to plain running." Pérez de Guzmán had the powder magazines in the city touched off at the last minute, and Panama went up in flames. It never was rebuilt on the same site.

Morgan remained amidst the ruins for longer than three weeks, during which time he amassed plunder worth 750,000 pieces of eight. His return to Jamaica in mid-March became a triumph. He appeared before the Council, and was informed that "the Board do give him thanks for executing his last commission and approve very well of his acting therein." Men called him the Hammer against the Spaniards. He had raised himself in five years from obscurity to fame. But there were tremendous repercussions in Europe. The Treaty of Madrid barely survived the shock of Panama. The Spanish Ambassador complained so long and acidly to Whitehall that Modyford was removed as Governor and both he and Morgan ordered to London, to stand trial. Buccaneering from the English islands was strictly prohibited.

The true feeling of the authorities, however, may be judged by the fact that the defendants were cleared and sent back to Jamaica, Morgan as Deputy-Governor and Modyford as Chief-Justice. In addition, Charles II knighted Morgan. The latter had three opportunities to rule the colony, serving on the last occasion for two consecutive years. He never again sailed as a freebooter, although at first he used the powers of his office to protect his old friends in the game.

The boldest raid of this transition period was that engineered by Bartholomew Sharp, John Coxon, Richard Sawkins and others. It was chronicled by two unusually literate members, the buccaneer-naturalist William Dampier, and the surgeon Lionel Wafer. Sailing from Port Morant, Jamaica, in January, 1680, they crossed the Isthmus of Panama, by way of the Darién country, an easier route than Morgan's. On the Pacific side they performed sensationally, only to quarrel and split into two parties. The one that returned to Jamaica, led by Coxon, found arrest warrants awaiting it. Somehow these were never served, and Coxon was himself employed by the Jamaican Council to hunt freebooters.

Concluding that his earlier methods had fulfilled their purpose, Sir

Henry Morgan, as Governor, between May, 1680, and May, 1682, was extremely active in suppressing buccaneering. He induced hundreds of sea rovers to accept pardons and become planters in Jamaica, and he hanged many of the recalcitrant. With his change of heart, the English colonial system may be said to have parted company with the buccaneers as such. French officials in the West Indies employed them for two decades longer.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### LA SALLE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

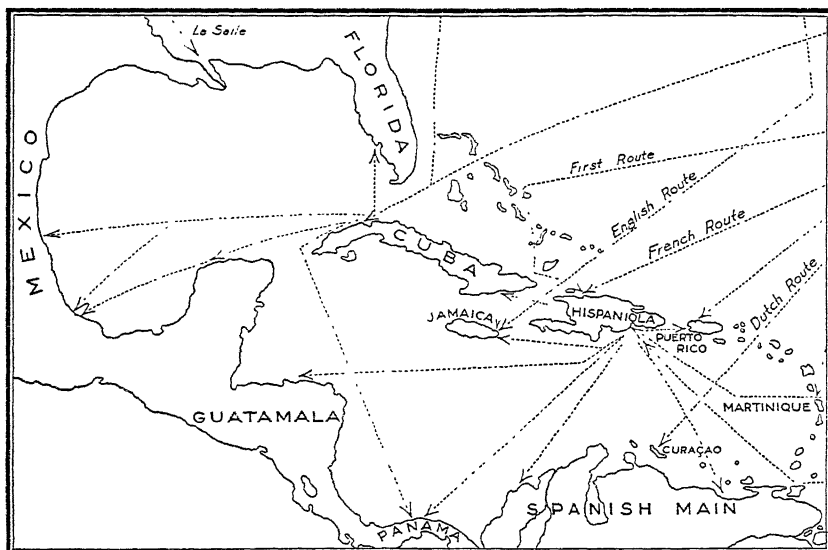
A MAP of the Caribbean, with arrows to indicate the routes of discovery and conquest, would show the Spaniards penetrating the sea from the east in twenty places. Their clustered arrows would curve in all directions after reaching the continents. The northern maritime nations would strike across the Atlantic diagonally, to pierce an occasional target such as Jamaica, Martinique and Curaçao. We are too apt to be careless about our history and recall these as the only approaches. But the map would also show one broad arrow coming straight down from the north, following the course of the Mississippi River and stopping at its mouth. This was the route of La Salle, whose expedition from Canada originated France's claim to the territory finally acquired by the United States as the Louisiana Purchase. It broke at a vital spot Spain's dominion over the shores of the inland sea.

The Norman youth, René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, who came to Montreal in 1666 at the age of twenty-three to make his fortune, possessed rare qualities as an explorer. He had been trained for the Jesuit priesthood and was by nature austere. He was an inveterate dreamer with delusions of grandeur, and so brave, resourceful and tenacious that he achieved the impracticable, up to a certain point. Aided by his curious power over the Red Indians of the north woods and plains, his rapid mastery of no fewer than nine of their dialects, he was able to organize and lead those most diabolical of savages. The advantage was priceless to him.

La Salle took up land in the well-established French colony on the St. Lawrence and started to cultivate it. He had obtained the homestead through the Sulpician Order, in which his brother Jean was an abbé. But so plodding a life was not for him. He heard rumors from his Indian friends of a river, the "Father of Waters," which he imagined must flow into the western ocean. This might be the passage to the Orient which mariners believed existed, but which none had found. Perhaps it connected with the Great Lakes. He resolved to be its discoverer, and at twenty-six persuaded the Governor of Canada to authorize an expedition with him as leader.

The adventures of La Salle during the next decade were epical. His





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first party broke up, and he ranged alone to the forests on the banks of the Ohio River, where he spent two years. There is no reliable account of what he did there, or by what magic he ingratiated himself with both the cruel Iroquois and their enemies, the Shawnees. A scout of the latter tribe, named Nika, became attached to him and followed him until death. The old *coureur des bois*, Nicolas Perrot, wrote in wonder of having spied La Salle in 1670 hunting with a huge band of the Iroquois.

When the explorer returned to Canada in 1672, he was better equipped than any man in the province to deal with Indians. He had also gained a fairly correct idea of the course of the Mississippi. The statesmanlike Comte de Frontenac was now Governor. La Salle won his confidence, and with this powerful backing made voyage after voyage along the Great Lakes, building forts, and founding trading posts which earned fortunes. He visited France and was granted a patent of nobility. But he had no faculty for amassing wealth. His associates robbed him, and he spent what remained on expensive sallies into the unknown, always with the object of tracing the legendary river.

During this period, he met the remarkable Italian soldier of fortune known as Henry de Tonty, the "man with the iron hand," who became his most valuable lieutenant and best friend. Tonty had lost his right hand in a European battle. He wore a metal substitute covered with a

glove. The uninformed were deceived by the dexterous manner in which he employed this fist.

Early in January, 1681, traveling in a canoe with three Frenchmen and his Indian bodyguard, Nika, La Salle descended the Illinois to its junction with the Mississippi, identifying the latter a little above St. Louis. From that moment, the one reason for his existence, as he saw it, was to complete the journey to the Gulf of Mexico. That that was where he would arrive was a matter of faith. He and the Indians might be mistaken, however, and the Father of Waters prove to have its outlet in the Atlantic.

La Salle returned by forced marches to Fort Frontenac, his headquarters, on Lake Ontario where the St. Lawrence begins. He delivered furs in part payment of his debts, borrowed more money and equipped an expedition which he took to another of his forts, Miami, on the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan. He garrisoned this position strongly as a base, chose twenty-three Frenchmen and eighteen Indians, and with Tonty as second in command he started afoot for the Illinois on December 21. The party dragged rude sledges bearing their baggage, including several birchbark canoes. They encountered sub-zero weather and frozen streams until they had passed Peoria Lake on the Illinois. The ice ended there. They discarded the sledges and took to the water in their canoes, emerging February 6, 1682, upon the swift current of the Mississippi.

It is a severe test to guide the flimsy craft of the north woods for any distance among the shoals, the tossing driftwood and the whirlpools formed by the tributaries that feed an immense river. La Salle and his men made nothing of going down to the ocean in hourly battle with these difficulties. The first day, they ran into floating ice, then met the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi, and were almost swamped. They camped for a night on the site of St. Louis, resuming their voyage at dawn. When they passed the mouth of the Ohio, they noted a change in both temperature and vegetation. The conviction grew that they were being rapidly swept due south.

They landed at Chickasaw Bluff on February 24, and La Salle decided to do some hunting in the Tennessee forests. He commenced the building of a stockade. One of his followers, a Frenchman named Prudhomme, strayed and was lost for a week. He was found by one of the Indian scouts half dead from starvation and exposure, but recovered slowly. The delay had caused the stockade to grow into a fort. It seemed a good base to La Salle, who called it Fort Prudhomme and left about a fourth of his party to hold it.

The rest of the descent was singularly fortunate. Near the mouth of the Arkansas, La Salle raised a cross and proclaimed the country annexed to France. The Indians, far milder than those of the north, flocked about the strangers in amiable wonder and offered two of their number as guides. Farther down, where the swamps began, Tonty and others visited a Taensa city in which the houses were built of sun-baked mud and a temple to the Sun suggested the religion of the Aztecs.

On April 6, La Salle reached the point where the Mississippi divides into three channels. He chose the one which runs southwest, sent Tonty down the middle passage and a voyageur named d'Autray to the southeast. With one other birchbark canoe following him, the master explorer paddled on April 9, 1682, into the Gulf of Mexico. Keeping close to the shore, he picked up his comrades at the second and third outlets. They beached at the most southerly point of dry land and erected a monument.

Jacques de la Metairie, a notary public enlisted at Fort Frontenac, prepared a document which set forth that the Sieur de La Salle declared this region a possession of the King of France. A leaden plate, brought along with a fine sense of drama, was buried at the foot of the column. It read:

*"Ludovicus Magnus Regnat."*

La Salle came 141 years after Hernando de Soto discovered the Mississippi at the head of a formidable expedition, only to die and be sunk in its waters. The Spaniards never improved their opportunity to conquer North America by mounting the great river. Its very existence had grown to be something vague to them, and La Salle may be said to have rediscovered it. He came with a few canoes and barely thirty men, half of whom were Indians. It was a far less auspicious arrival than that of the Huguenot colonists who had sought to win northern Florida in the preceding century. But his was the venture that altered the course of history. He himself was to meet tragedy and accomplish nothing more. But just as definitely as that other thwarted hero, Balboa, he had blazed a mighty trail.

La Salle returned to Canada by the way he had come, dropping off Tonty at a settlement southwest of Lake Michigan which he called Fort Saint Louis of the Illinois (River). He sailed for France the following year, to report to the King and persuade the latter to appoint him Governor of an officially sponsored colony with a port at the mouth of the Mississippi.

Louis XIV granted an interview, condescended to be somewhat dazzled by the imperial prospect unrolled. He agreed to assign a thirty-six-

gun warship, a small corvette and two vessels with stores. The recruiting of two hundred soldiers on the basis of their becoming colonists, as well as civilian volunteers of both sexes, was authorized. But with the queer parsimony of kings in that age, Louis specified that should La Salle fail to establish a colony in three years and drive the Spaniards from its frontiers, he must reimburse the Government for the costs of the entire expedition. Grimly amused as he recalled his debts, the explorer accepted.

The flotilla sailed in July, 1684, for the Mississippi by way of French Hispaniola. The latter now consisted of most of the western end of the island, encroachments from Tortuga having driven back the Spaniards. This situation resulted in almost continuous fighting between the two peoples. It was an unfortunate route for La Salle, especially as the naval officer, Beaujeu, in charge of the King's ships, pigheadedly refused to take advice of any sort. One of the boats, carrying seeds, tools and other important supplies for the colony, fell into the hands of the Spaniards through the blundering of Beaujeu.

La Salle, unaccustomed to the Tropics, caught malaria at the port of Petit Gonave. His brother, the Abbé Jean Cavelier, was with him, a circumstance of small comfort since the two did not get along together. He would have preferred infinitely to have Tonty of the iron hand. His colonists rioted ashore. Some deserted and joined the buccaneers. Others picked up syphilis in a town acknowledged to be a hell-hole; they became dreadful liabilities during the last phase of the fiasco.

By November 25, La Salle had revived sufficiently to continue the voyage. After a pause at the Isle of Pines, the boats turned into the Gulf. They reached the coast at an unknown spot, fumbled westward and on New Year's Day, 1685, dropped anchor off an inlet which Captain Beaujeu declared to be at the latitude and longitude of the mouth of the Mississippi. His navigation had been grotesquely at fault. It was Galveston Bay. However, La Salle believed he must be correct, within a few miles, and insisted merely that they search for one of the three passages. Matagorda inlet, still farther west, appeared to fill the bill, and the colonists were landed.

The wrecking on a sandbar of the remaining supply ship, with a partial loss of cargo, was the next blow. Then Beaujeu departed prematurely. La Salle built a fort. But he could not regard the settlement as a permanency. He spent weeks, then months, hunting for the true goal until at last he realized that he must be hundreds of miles away from it. This land was Texas. Diseases ravaged his people, who made hardly any effort to feed themselves either by hunting or farming. They were

reduced by death in two years from a total of perhaps two hundred to about forty.

In December, 1686, La Salle made up his mind to head northeast for Canada, with the certainty of striking the Mississippi en route. Twenty men voted to accompany him. He left thirteen men and seven women at the fort, in charge of Lieutenant Barbier. These perished. Spaniards eventually came upon the deserted fort, but found no clue to the fate of its occupants.

Mutiny disrupted La Salle's party, and in mid-March, 1687, the leader was shot to death on the Texas prairie by two of his followers. The Abbé Cavelier and six others pushed forward, lost one by drowning, and at the junction of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers fell in with soldiers dispatched by Tonty.

The grievous end of La Salle's dream did not cancel the project itself, as was so often the case in those days. Louis XIV would have nothing more to do with it, until its worth had been acclaimed by the men of Canada and the Great Lakes, who persistently carved out empires for France to lose.

Tonty led the next expedition, hoping to rescue the survivors of the fort in Texas and transfer them eastward. He failed to accomplish this, but was active for longer than a decade in the Mississippi delta country. Hard at his heels came *coureurs des bois* to trap and hunt, and traders to found posts here and there along the river.

Finally, the brothers Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, and Jean-Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, set out to make a reality of the King's claim. They appeared on the Gulf as early as 1699, but their protracted exploits form part of the story of the Eighteenth Century.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE LAST BUCCANEERS

FRANCE, as has been said, did not follow the course of England in repudiating the buccaneers after Morgan's coup at Panama had shown that the "sweet trade" was now hardly to be distinguished from intercolonial warfare. Despite the twenty-year Truce of Ratisbon, which France signed in 1684 along with all the chief countries of Europe, and which specifically declared against these irregulars, their help was retained by the Governors of the French possessions in the Caribbean. The argument advanced was cogent. France had an unrecognized frontier in Hispaniola, and only the buccaneers seemed able to hold back the Spaniards.

The farcical nature of the Truce of Ratisbon became evident in 1689, when William of Orange, new King of England as William III, joined hands with the Netherlands and Spain in attacking Louis XIV over the question of the succession of the Palatinate. Spain as England's ally: the West Indies found it incredible! It would have stunned Morgan, but he had died the year before. Promptly the buccaneers swung into action for a new fling, and there is evidence that many of the English left in that calling made common cause with the French. Assisting Spain was the one thing they could not stomach.

The first important blow was struck by Tarin de Cussy, Governor of French Hispaniola, who led a thousand men, mostly freebooters, to the capture and destruction of Santiago de los Caballeros, in the Spanish part of the island. An English fleet drove the French from St. Kitts, then hurried to the support of the Spaniards in raking the French towns in the west. Cussy was killed in the burning of Cap François. He was succeeded by an abler man, Jean-Baptiste Du Casse, who had been trained as a naval officer.

One notably effective buccaneer captain was Laurens de Graff, of Dutch birth and formerly a gunner in the Spanish Navy. He held letters of marque from Cussy, and oddly enough a French royal commission as a major. Laurens worried the north coast of Jamaica, robbing plantations and seizing eight or ten trading sloops. Then he transferred his attentions to the Spaniards, from whom he took much greater toll.

The war swayed back and forth, marked by sloth on the part of the

Spaniards in following up advantages. The spirit of Admiral Menéndez was no longer in them. At home, the House of Hapsburg was flickering out in the person of the idiot King, Charles II, "The Bewitched," and the colonial system seemed to partake of his stupor.

June 7, 1692, Port Royal, Jamaica, was shattered by one of the most severe earthquakes in history. Two-thirds of the city toppled into the sea, all the fortifications were demolished, and "a great part of its inhabitants miserably knocked on the head or drowned." On the testimony of early chroniclers, Gardner writes: "The horrors of the event were intensified by the mysterious, awful sounds, that one moment appeared to be in the air and then in the ground. . . . Though there was no breeze the sea rose in mighty waves, tearing ships from their anchorage, and sweeping them over the sunken ruins of the town." Thus fell the former capital of the buccaneers.

Regarding the disaster as providential aid, the French swooped back to the scourging of Jamaica. Landing parties to snatch slaves and burn houses were almost weekly events. Twice, Du Casse sent large expeditions of corsairs. In June, 1694, he sailed himself with twenty-two vessels and 1,500 men to achieve the conquest of the island. He devastated the southeastern end, cruised past Port Royal and disembarked at Carlisle Bay, where he fought an indecisive engagement with the local militia. Unable to make headway, he packed up his plunder and left. Fifty sugar works and two hundred houses had been burned, and 1,300 slaves captured.

A few months later, an English fleet of twenty-three ships arrived at Jamaica, and with Spanish help retaliated on the coast towns of French Hispaniola, or Saint Domingue as it was now being called. The tactics employed showed no improvement, from a military point of view, over those of Du Casse. Booty was the main object. Heavy losses resulted from disease and mismanagement. Englishmen and Spaniards snarled at one another, weary of their synthetic friendship. Jamaica felt it was quits with Saint Domingue, a sentiment which the latter shared. This phase of the war subsided.

But Du Casse's cherished plan, ever since his appointment as Governor six years before, had been to hamstring the Spaniards, and with this he was resolved to go ahead. He had thought at first of attempting to seize Vera Cruz or Cartagena with his buccaneers and of holding the position until he had extorted a session of territory. He had come around to the belief that it would be simpler to overrun the island of Hispaniola, and rule in future from Santo Domingo city. There can be no doubt that the second project was the sounder of the two.

He was much chagrined, therefore, to receive a letter in September, 1696, from Pontchartrain, Minister of Marine, ordering him to co-operate with Jean Bernard Desjeans, Baron de Pointis, who was equipping in France a privateering expedition along the old lines. Du Casse protested, and was brusquely put in his place. A second letter required him to mobilize all the buccaneers who frequented the colony, and to prevent them from wasting their strength on any other task but that of aiding Pointis, who would arrive about February 15, 1697. The point of attack, it was implied, would be Cartagena.

Du Casse had been forced into the curious position of establishing himself as leader of the freebooters, rather than their patron. It was the only way to hold them inactive; they were like children, who had to be lived with and their imaginations fed on stories of rewards to come. He already had great influence over them, and they accepted him warmly. Yet he found his task difficult. Pointis was two weeks late, and when he reached port on March 1 with nine frigates, four corvettes and four thousand men, the buccaneers were on the verge of scattering. Some individuals had slipped off. Du Casse rallied but 715 of them in seven frigates and a number of smaller craft, to which force was added the 170 regular soldiers he commanded and a few volunteers.

The Baron de Pointis, unfortunately, was a domineering, selfish character, with a broad streak of the martinet in him. He proclaimed himself the dictator of the expedition, and was jealous to the point of mania of Du Casse, whom he could not wholly deprive of independent authority. He resented the loose discipline of the buccaneers, and according to Haring he informed them that he "would lead them not as a companion in fortune but as a military superior, and that they must submit themselves to the same rules as the men on the King's ships." This last was manifestly absurd and unenforceable. If it had not been for Du Casse, who restored order among the resentful corsairs, the latter would have taken their boats out of port, then lurked near by to harry the men from France.

Vigor and the ability to plan a campaign were not lacking in Pointis, however. He was putting all elements of his fleet through maneuvers at a secret rendezvous within twenty days of his arrival. Awaiting favorable weather, he crossed the Caribbean swiftly and on April 13 was loitering twelve miles east of Cartagena, ready to begin the attack.

The defenses of the city were vastly improved over those which Drake had stormed more than a hundred years before. Pointis had fairly reliable information about them, obtained in France, but found that he had to depend on Du Casse and his buccaneers for essential



details. There was only one road from Cartagena into the interior, commanded by a fortified hill called La Popa, and Pointis wisely concluded that this should be the first position seized. Domination of the road would prevent the removal of treasure from the city. But his best efforts to land at the twelve-mile station were unavailing in a pounding surf, and he was nearly drowned himself while searching for a channel through the breakers. He fell back on the remembered tactics of Drake, and was thwarted again. Time had wrought too many changes.

The Boca Grande, used by the English privateer (see Chapter Thirteen) to gain entrance to the outer harbor, had been filled in. The Boca Chica, commanded by a powerful fort on Tierra Bomba Island, was the sole gateway, and the Spaniards had reason to believe that their Cartagena of the Indies was at last impregnable. In dashing style, however, under cover of a terrific bombardment from the ships, a thousand men were disembarked on the sixteenth on Tierra Bomba. A reinforcement of three hundred Spanish soldiers for the fort reached the harbor shore of the island during the day, were promptly routed by a machete charge of buccaneers, and Boca Chica surrendered.

Pointis now entered the bay and massed his ships opposite Fort Santa Cruz, the chief warden of the inner harbor, which he battered mercilessly. At the same time, he sent practically the entire command of buccaneers to the mainland, to flank La Popa. The enemy had sunk three or four vessels in the channel between Forts Santa Cruz and Manzanillo, effectively closing it. When he perceived this, Pointis ordered up all his extra troops from Boca Chica and led them along the sandspit, in imitation of Drake, to the assault of Cartagena. They faltered before bastions such as Drake had never seen, but the garrison of Santa Cruz thought it would be cut off and fled into the city, and Pointis occupied the fort.

Meanwhile, the buccaneers had captured La Popa and stood facing San Lázaro, a strong works which formed the second line of defense, the third being the island suburb of Getsémani linked by narrow bridges to the mainland and to the city behind.

Pointis found it impracticable to advance from his position, so took two thousand men and joined Du Casse near San Lázaro. The two commanders could see no possibility of entering Cartagena until this fort had been taken, and they appear to have had an exaggerated respect for it. Their carefully planned charge down the main road drew scarcely any fire, the Spaniards evacuating on the opposite side and pouring into Getsémani.

There was much sterner fighting during the next week for possession

of the triangular walled suburb on its rock base in Cartagena Harbor. Pointis seized the bridgehead; he brought twenty-seven cannon from his ships with enormous labor. Six of these pieces, of the largest caliber in that age, were concentrated against the landward gate at a distance of a hundred yards. Getsémani endured a brutal pounding until the thirtieth, when Du Casse led the buccaneers roaring through a breach, followed by the French regulars. Cartagena refused to open its gates to the retreating defenders until the latter had counter-attacked hopelessly, and the streets ran with twice as much blood as need have been shed.

The guns were moved up, and following a bombardment of three hours Cartagena capitulated on May 3, 1697. The chief feature of Pointis' terms was, that each inhabitant was free either to leave the place or to remain in his house. If he went, he must surrender all his property. If he stayed, he must furnish an inventory, and thereupon half his wealth in gold, silver and jewels would be confiscated. The other half would be turned back to him and the individual regarded as a subject of France. Such were the ethics of the day in diffusing the blessings of empire. The terms, indeed, were relatively humane. Victors in the Caribbean, up till then, had followed the simple rule of taking everything portable.

Leniency was shown by the French Admiral even in the matter of collecting the tribute. He did his utmost to suppress private looting. The estimates of the amount he got vary greatly, but it would seem to have been around \$100,000,000. The buccaneers had expected to be given a fourth of the whole, this having been stipulated by Du Casse in their behalf before sailing. Pointis, less generous with his own confederates than with the foe, announced at the last moment that his contract left him no choice but to pay them off with 40,000 crowns, which he proceeded to do. The trivial sum excited their fury and contempt, but Du Casse promised to appeal their case to the King and a battle between corsairs and privateers was averted.

Hastened by the usual epidemic of yellow fever, the fleet left in two sections. Pointis returned to France, and Du Casse to his duties in Saint Domingue. But the buccaneers lagged behind with their ships, and as soon as they had "lost" the gallant colonial Governor who had been their leader, they went back to Cartagena. They had reached a typical decision. Since Pointis had cheated them, God's blood! they would collect a ransom in the old way. The city, scarred and starving, was appalled to see them. When they demanded 5,000,000 French *livres* (in excess of \$20,000,000), the treasure somehow was produced, or nearly

all of it, and the brethren of wrath departed. But their lucky star had set.

A few miles out to sea, they ran into an English and Dutch fleet which had been looking for Pointis. It overwhelmed the freebooters, capturing two of their most richly loaded craft and forcing two others on shore. The survivors who fled to Morgan's former haunt, the Isle des Vaches, and divided what remained of the spoils may properly be called the last buccaneers.

Spain was sick of the war. News of the Cartagena disaster unquestionably influenced her in accepting the Peace of Ryswick, which was signed three weeks after the Baron de Pointis reappeared in Europe. The treaty formally gave Saint Domingue to France. It again outlawed the sea-rovers of the Caribbean, a policy to which France at last adhered. Like England, she gave them the choice of reforming, or of hanging as pirates. It proved easy for her to dispense with their military aid, because she did not fight another war with Spain until the time of Napoleon.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### FIASCO IN DARIEN

THE most extraordinary British attempt—it was by no means English—to colonize in the Caribbean region occurred as the Seventeenth Century closed. A hard-headed Scotch businessman conceived it early in the 1690's and nearly 1,500 Scotch people, rich and poor, subscribed more than \$1,000,000 to the venture. The Peace of Ryswick should have been a deterrent, but was ignored by the promoters. King William III strongly disapproved and was supported by his Parliament at Westminster. England and Scotland, however, were not yet merged into a single state. William was a liberal at the head of a dual monarchy, and he did not care to use the machinery of power south of the Tweed to compel the obedience of his subjects north of that river.

The project originally called for trading with savage countries "not held by any European sovereign," and to that end the Company of Scotland was incorporated in Edinburgh on June 26, 1695. Its promoter, William Paterson, thought it essential that there should be an overseas settlement, to be used as a depot, a training ground for merchants, and a colonial outlet for Scottish talents generally. He chose the Darién country at the South American end of the Isthmus of Panama, on the theory that it was not effectively occupied by Spain. The buccaneers, William Dampier and Lionel Wafer, had so informed him. This idea was accepted by the Company in 1696, and the act of incorporation was changed accordingly.

It would have been difficult for his fellow countrymen not to believe in William Paterson. He had gone to London to make his fortune, and had founded the Bank of England, no less. When he returned and promised to enrich the investors in his trading company, who could doubt him?

Paterson was beguiled by the notion of finding ready-made customers among the Darién Indians, of whom he had so little knowledge that he proposed to sell them wigs, hats and heavy clothing of every sort, including carpet slippers. With better judgment, he perceived the advantage of holding a part of that Isthmus which offered the shortest route to the Orient. But he did not stop to reflect that the Spaniards could not possibly tolerate his presence there, in competition with Panama. They could not tolerate it, even if they had never annexed the

territory. And he was proposing to occupy land stained with the blood of one of their earliest expeditions, the very section from which Balboa had marched to the discovery of the Pacific, the sites of towns abandoned by Pedrárias in favor of Panama.

It is an irony of colonization that this spot has enticed adventurers in every century, but has proved unconquerable, in any real sense. No other part of the Caribbean littoral is so wild today, except perhaps the Guajiro peninsula between Colombia and Venezuela. The inhabitants, fiercely exclusive, armed with poisoned arrows, are descended from the same Indians of bastard Chibchan and Carib stock who chose war to the death in preference to slavery, until the early Spaniards steered clear of them as they would from a nest of wasps. William Paterson would have had a hard time with his new Scottish subjects, if other forces had not intervened to check his course.

While the war raged between England, Holland and Spain in the one camp and France in the other, the Company of Scotland went ahead with its preparations. There was some logic in hoping that an ally might make concessions. But when hostilities ceased, with Spain a sufferer as a result of the Cartagena affair, it assuredly was an error to ruffle her pride and menace her prosperity by insisting on a scheme which the King of Scotland himself had disavowed at Madrid.

In July, 1698, a year after the coup of Pointis and Du Casse, five ships of medium tonnage carrying the heavy armament of 175 guns sailed from the port of Leith. There were 1,200 colonists aboard, most of them being artisans and tradesmen, though sixty army officers had been prudently included, to organize the military end of things in case of trouble. Paterson himself headed this vanguard of the Company of Scotland's recruits. His wife accompanied him. "There were also documents," writes Means, "providing instructions and outlining the colonial government by a self-renewing Council of seven, but without, unfortunately, clear regulations concerning the choice of a president."

The political innocence of Paterson is shown by the fact that he halted at Vieques Island, then known to English mariners as Crab Island, within sight of the eastern end of Puerto Rico, and took possession of it as a halfway port for this and future voyages. Such watering places under one's own flag were valuable in the days of sail. But Vieques, though uninhabited, had always been part of the government of Puerto Rico. It was ludicrous to imagine that it could be acquired like a desert island. The Scotch took exercise ashore, planned where to build wharves, and caused enough talk to attract soldiers of fortune who

came to Vieques and offered their services. The somnolent garrison at San Juan did not bestir itself, but reported the aggression to Spain and awaited orders.

In October, the expedition proceeded to the Darién coast and landed on Golden, the largest of the San Blas islets. On November 3, 1698, they declared a vaguely defined section of the Isthmus thereabouts to be the colony of Caledonia, and started to build the town of New Edinburgh with its Fort St. Andrew on a cape opposite Golden Island. Within ten miles to the west along the coast, in the order named, were Aclá and Sir Francis Drake's Port Pheasant. Both had been deserted long since. But Paterson would have done well to find it ominous that Balboa's head had fallen at "The Bones of Men," the Indian meaning of the name Aclá; and that Drake's fort, the first erected by English hands in America, had been short-lived.

The natives assumed that the newcomers must be enemies of the Spaniards, and so received them with the friendliness they had accorded all privateers and pirates. They do not appear even to have resented the pre-empting of land, the building of houses, for they thought the activity temporary and part of the game of illicit trading. But these Indians failed to be tempted by the Scotch wares. Their sales resistance to wigs was unshakable, and they showed a painful apathy about the 1,500 English Bibles which Paterson had optimistically included in his stock.

The climate was poisonous to the colonists, their death rate from fever surpassing that of any other group from northern Europe in that age of ignorance concerning the mosquito. Mrs. Paterson was one of the first to go. Politics, played after the manner of a Scotch town meeting, did not help matters. The Councillors bickered without respite over theology, morals and their personal dignity, while the electorate succumbed to yellow-jack. There was a phenomenal amount of drinking, but as all whites in the Tropics believed firmly that liquor acted as a sort of disinfectant and staved off disease, it is not to be wondered at.

A few Spanish soldiers came reconnoitering from Panama, and were driven away. But England's hostility was scarcely less disturbing. A warship from Jamaica hovered near Caledonia before Paterson had been there a month, appraising the situation. On receiving a report, the Governor of Jamaica issued a proclamation forbidding all intercourse with the Scotch colonists. He had received an order to this effect from England. The Admiral of the King's ships in the Caribbean happened to be a romantic figure, John Benbow, the son of a tanner, who had

fought his way up. He felt a personal sympathy for adventurers such as those in Darién, and he ignored instructions to make things uncomfortable for them. Rather, he sent them good advice and promised his help if an emergency arose.

A second wave of recruits was expected from Scotland. The serious illness of William Paterson coming on top of manifest economic failure, however, caused the residue of the first 1,200 to decide to leave in June, 1699. Their ships were in wretched condition, their sides pierced below the waterline by sea-worms and cluttered with barnacles. Some went down in gales and others were driven ashore. A single vessel reached home. She carried about 275 survivors.

But the second expedition had already departed, in two squadrons, one of which landed three hundred colonists at deserted New Edinburgh in August, 1699. The discouragement of these virtual castaways was extreme. It was augmented by the accidental burning of their best ship with all her cargo. Yet theirs was the only stroke of luck that befell the entire venture. They were aided by Benbow to move on, bag and baggage, to Jamaica. They took up land there and became permanent settlers. The stout old Admiral was forced to answer for this in London, where he was diplomatically forgiven.

Tragedy stalked the major section of the Company of Scotland's second expedition. It was in four good ships and consisted of 1,300 of the most promising colonists that had been mustered, under sound military guidance. Colonel Alexander Campbell of Finab joined it in the West Indies, and assumed command. These energetic men were shocked at the condition of their heritage. The small garrison which the previous group had posted had been grossly negligent.

"On our arriveall," wrote the Councillors to their Board of Directors, "wee found all the hutts within Fort St. Andrew burn'd down to the ground, and the principall batteries of the Fort which guarded the enterance of the Bay quite demolished; and whereas there were full accounts given of ye Colony's having cutt all the wood on the neck of the Isthmus, wee found no such thing, but on the conterary, on the side within the Bay, imperviable mongraves [mangroves] and mossy ground; and on the side without the Bay for the most pairt inaccessible rocks; and the middle way mountainous and full of trees whereof there are not six cutt."

The decision, nevertheless, was to make a success of Caledonia by their own efforts. The mood of the majority seems to have been one of resentment against the migrants to Jamaica. Setting out to prove what weaklings the latter had been, they lasted just six and a half months,

during which time they did no trade, planted no crops and were engaged in bitter conflict with the Spaniards.

The troops of the province of Panama moved to attack them in February, 1700, and built a palisaded fort at Topocante in the hills overlooking New Edinburgh. A lively battle was fought. Colonel Campbell whipped the Spaniards, but the enemy fell back on their entrenchments and awaited re-enforcements. Before the end of the month, Don Juan Pimienta, Governor of Cartagena, arrived with eleven warships and effectively blockaded the Scotch colony.

The rest was a series of skirmishes, followed by an ultimatum, and then elaborate parleys. Pimienta was not bloodthirsty. He admired the courage of the interlopers, and finished by agreeing to let them depart in their own ships with the honors of war. This was consummated on April 11, 1700. But it would have been far better for the vanquished if they had gone as prisoners. A few had the good fortune to drift to Jamaica in sloops.

Of the four large vessels, one was driven by contrary winds to that very Cartagena she had hoped to escape. The Spaniards bought her for a trifle. It is not clear what became of the crew and passengers. Another boat was wrecked on the coast of Cuba, and the third went down with all hands in a hurricane in the Florida Channel. The fourth broke to pieces off Charleston, South Carolina, and a small percentage of its personnel was saved.

The known mortality from all causes among the 1,300 reached the shocking figure of 940. Of the remaining 360, only a handful returned to Scotland. Stragglers were identified from time to time, dispersed through the British colonies from Barbados to New York.

Francis Russell Hart, one of the most careful students of the Darién fiasco, describes the aftermath as follows:

"The news of the surrender of the colonists to the Spaniards, which meant the ruin of all their hopes, brought forth [in Scotland] a popular indignation which knew no bounds. Those suffering personal grief cried aloud for revenge. The blow to the pride of the country was felt not alone by those whose money was in the venture. In talk, in letters, in pamphlets and broadsides, and in the hearts of the people, the cry was for redress or indemnification by someone. The honor of Scotland sought vindication. The popular belief was that the failure was due to the unfriendly position taken by the English people and specifically to the attitude of the West Indian Governors acting under direction of their sovereign."



Paterson, according to Hart, showed the attributes of real greatness, the capacity to endure failure without flinching. It is true that he put the claims of small shareholders ahead of his own, that he advocated serenity, and that "with commendable fairness, he exposed the fact that English opposition was only one of the causes" of the disaster.

Scotland was being wooed to yield her separate national status, and Paterson shrewdly turned this to account. He made it a condition of union that the Darién investors must be repaid in full, with five-per-cent interest. This was finally written into Article 15 of the Act of Union of England and Scotland, which took effect in 1707. He was cleverer by far than the promoters of an earlier fantasy, the Puritans who had tried to establish a tropical heaven on Old Providence Island.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

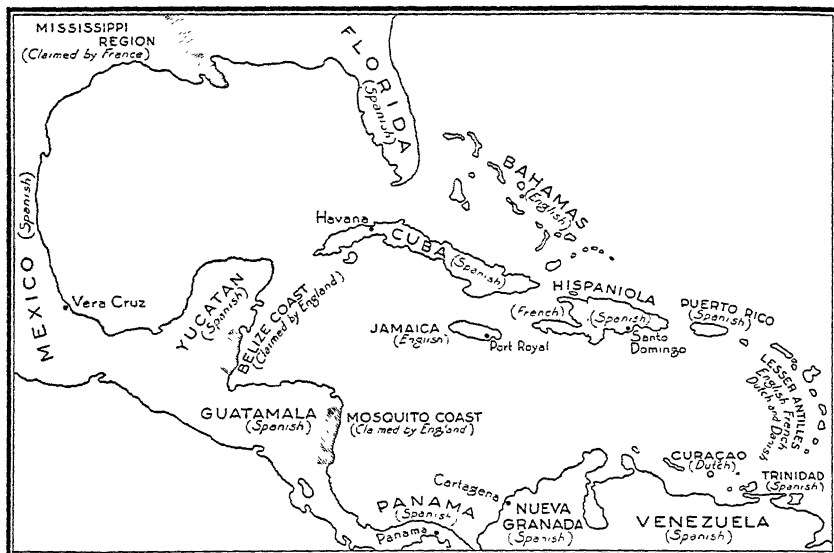
### AT THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SPAIN'S triumph over the last free American Indian civilization did not occur till the closing years of the Seventeenth Century. This point is strongly emphasized by Means, with the remark that "it has received only the slightest attention from modern historians." His work, indeed, is the indispensable source of knowledge in English concerning the conquest of the Itzas of Yucatan. The event rounded out the Iberian empire in and about the Caribbean Sea. It coincided with the cession of the western part of Hispaniola to France, the renascence of Cartagena despite the Pointis-Du Casse coup there, and the failure of the Scotch colony on the Isthmus. The lines were to shift again in Florida and the islands, but on the central and southern mainland they held fast until the day of revolution sent Spain's colonial system crashing.

We have seen (Chapter Ten) that in 1542 Francisco de Montejo the Younger overthrew the Mayas near the seaboard and founded the city of Mérida, Yucatan. Control was gradually extended to the northern half of the peninsula and around the coast. It would not have been a serious military problem to occupy the deeply forested interior, but the early Governors postponed action on the grounds that the cost in lives would be excessive. Lake Petén became the center of small Mayan principalities, some of which had retreated from the border uplands of Guatemala, where the Spaniards were firmly established. They were an inconvenience because they prevented the building of a road to connect the colonies of Yucatan and Guatemala. Mild efforts to subdue or Christianize them, however, had always failed.

The chief Mayan kingdom was that of the Itzas, with its capital on the fortified island of Tayascal in Lake Petén. It had a population of some 80,000 in the 1690's. The city, built of stone, was a miniature, deteriorated example of the splendid architecture of the past. Canek, the hereditary ruler, an able cacique, had the respect of the Spaniards, though they found it hard to bear his paganism.

A new humanitarian sentiment prevailed in Madrid, as may be judged from the circumstance that the King forbade the use of force to crush the Itzas. He wanted them converted, and then persuaded to become his subjects. So an offer, made in 1692, by Don Martin de Ursúa, Governor



The Caribbean in 1700

of Yucatan, was well received. He guaranteed that he would construct the needed road to Guatemala at his own expense, and that this would result in bringing all the forest tribes into peaceful submission.

Ursúa sent Father Andrés de Avendaño, a Franciscan friar, accompanied by several priestly associates and an escort of 115 soldiers, to negotiate with Canek. The ecclesiastics were sincere enough, but the soldiers reverted to type and plundered the Indians en route. Avendaño was forced to turn back from his first attempt. He reached Tayasal in January, 1696, and appears to have convinced the cacique that Spanish rule and the ascendancy of the Catholic faith were inevitable. The military road, already started, served as a powerful argument. A mass baptism of Itzan children followed.

The conservative faction in the realm, however, refused to support Canek when the latter sent an envoy bearing his submission to Ursúa. The Governor employed good strategy. He hastened the building of the road while the political uncertainty lasted, and he succeeded in pushing it to the shore of Lake Petén before the anti-Spanish party took the upper hand and imprisoned Canek in his own palace. Pathetically, these rebels were resolved that the person of their King must not fall into alien hands, to be used against them as Montezuma and Atahualpa had been. But it was too late for an Indian nation to be saved.

Ursúa embarked with a strong force in galleys, on March 13, 1697, to cross the lake and gain possession of Canek. He honestly hoped not to have to fire on the Itzas. The despairing natives left him no choice. They swarmed by thousands in war canoes, shooting arrows and throwing javelins. Ursúa at last ordered the use of musketry, and the lightning of slaughter which had so often blasted naked bodies elsewhere was re-enacted until the water was thick with the floating dead. In a little more than an hour, he entered Tayasal, and the war was over. He completed the highway to Guatemala.

Crown and Church were gratified, but the progressive degradation of the Mayan peoples has been such that it is work for an antiquarian today to determine the state of their culture in the 1690's. They fitted badly into the pattern of Spanish feudalism and quickly lost heart. It is only fair to add that this conclusion is not in accord with that of Means, who believes that the Itzas were elevated by the mere fact of their acceptance of the religion of their conquerors.

South of Yucatan proper and east of the Petén country is a strip of coastland in which England began to have proprietorial right during the Seventeenth Century. It is now the colony of British Honduras, but at that time was admittedly within the Spanish domain. The buccaneers had had hiding places there. From 1662, it was frequented by shipmasters, chiefly from Jamaica, who engaged in illicit lumbering. They cut mahogany and a species of dyewood for which there was great demand in Europe, designated by the unimaginative name of logwood. Small settlements of lumbermen were soon formed. When the Governors of Jamaica moved to suppress buccaneering, they argued that, as a sort of compensation, the Spaniards should not interfere with the log-cutting trespassers.

Concessions were obtained, unofficially. The Spaniards vacillated between winking at the trade and sending punitive expeditions. This caused the camps to concentrate on the Belize River, so as to be able to raise a band at a pinch and resist. The Bay Islands in the Gulf of Honduras were regarded by the Belize English as a way-station on the route to Jamaica. Sir Henry Morgan had once placed colonists there, and the prevailing language was English.

Farther down the Central American coast, a still more extravagant claim was maintained. Because the island of Old Providence had been sporadically held, and because during the presence of the Puritan settlers there a commerce had sprung up with Mosquito Indians of the mainland, the English said that they enjoyed a protectorate over most of the Caribbean littoral of Nicaragua. The Spaniards had never

exerted themselves to subdue the Mosquito country, which is low-lying and inhospitable. But they insisted on their ownership of it.

These vague encroachments at the western end of the sea were conducted through the Government of Jamaica, which proposed to make dependencies of the lands in question. The claims were without legal standing at the end of the Seventeenth Century, but were later to be compromised to the advantage of England.

Guatemala, Panama, Nueva Granada and Venezuela had acquired as provinces the strong individuality which the Spanish system fostered without realizing where it was going to lead. Madrid's lust for commercial gain was so great that, not content with forcing the individual colonies to buy and sell exclusively Spanish, a conscious effort was made to prevent them from knowing anything about one another. It was feared that intercourse would breed rebellion. In point of fact, isolation had that effect. Hatred of the central Government fermented simultaneously, and the profound harm resulting to the colonies was that they were unprepared to conceive of unity on any subject except this one. But we are vaulting ahead of the march of history.

Guatemala was a lesser edition of the viceroyalty of Mexico. There was the same overwhelming Indian majority, to whom work in the mines or peonage on the haciendas did not seem very irksome, since it resembled the economy under which their fathers had lived. It should be remembered that the province included Chiapas and other lands on the Pacific subsequently absorbed by the Republic of Mexico.

Panama was still the vital link between Occident and Orient and, of more immediate import, between the inland sea and the west coast of South America. Its capital, however, was no longer the center of Spanish influence on the Caribbean proper. Subtly, this position had shifted to Cartagena, which had a magnificent harbor on the sea itself, with the added advantage of being the maritime outlet of a rich province, Nueva Granada. When Sir Henry Morgan destroyed Old Panama—*Muy Noble y Leal Ciudad*; as Philip II entitled it—in 1671, he caused a removal to the present site. New Panama was growing rapidly, was if anything a more active commercial center than its predecessor had been, yet could not recapture the ancient prestige. Several projects for digging a canal across the Isthmus were submitted to the King during the latter half of the century. They seemed chimerical, and were filed for reference.

Nueva Granada had a dual character. Its seaboard was a Caribbean country, the nerve-center of the Main. The remote plateau of Bogotá and the still more exclusive Popayan section rolling southward through

the Andes had attracted a seignioral society. The life came to resemble that of Spain, though on a more expansive scale. Bogotá was developing a pride in its intellectual atmosphere, the estheticism of its manners. The Seventeenth Century saw only the proud youth of a city which later was called, with some justice, the Athens of America.

Venezuela, with a capital younger by a generation than Bogotá, flourished primitively in strangely diversified territory. Cattle-raising had become important on the vast *llanos*, or plains, tapped by the Orinoco beyond the mountains. Caracas in its celestial vale, six and a half miles from the coast in a beeline, yet 3,025 feet above sea level, was the home of a few distinguished families. The name Bolívar already was considered illustrious, the first-comer having been appointed Solicitor-General of the province in 1589.

Around the northeastern corner of South America, from Venezuela, lies Guiana, a no-man's land to the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors, and the only part of the continent which they allowed to slip away from them. Geographically, it is not a part of the Caribbean region, but has decidedly become so politically as a result of European ownership linked up with island colonies. Mention has been made of early English, French and Dutch adventures there. By the middle of the Seventeenth Century, the Dutch had occupied territories called Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, which now form British Guiana. In 1652, the English took Surinam, the land eastward to the Maroni River, and shortly afterward the French settled beyond the Maroni. As one of the terms of the Treaty of Breda, in 1667, the Dutch proved poor bargainers for once, and cheerfully exchanged New Amsterdam (New York City and a large part of New York State) for the Surinam coast. The English flag disappeared temporarily from Guiana.

Maneuvering for position in the Lesser Antilles had been somewhat to the advantage of England. Between 1647 and 1649, the Company of Eleutherian Adventurers began the occupation of the Bahama Islands, which in 1671 were recognized as a colonial unit, with the seat of government on New Providence. The town was often destroyed by the Spaniards. When rebuilt on a permanent site in 1691, it was called Nassau in honor of William III.

The most notable French advance was the reduction of Grenada by an expedition which left Martinique in 1650. The Caribs fought valorously to hold this island and were decimated. Herded to the edge of a steep cliff as the campaign ended, hundreds of them leaped into the sea rather than surrender.

Denmark became a Caribbean power in 1671, when the islands of St. Thomas and St. John were settled by the Danish West India and Guiana Company. St. Croix, administered for France by the Knights of Malta since 1651, was not acquired by the Danes until the next century.

Spanish Hispaniola, ruined and half deserted, was about to enter a long period during which it made no history. Puerto Rico had drowsed for a hundred years, but had a population of some 75,000 deeply rooted in the soil to show for it. Cuba was recovering from the effects of Mexico's allure for her people, and was definitely finding her true source of wealth in tobacco and the sugar cane.

In all parts of the region, the shipping of agricultural produce to Europe was on the increase. This constituted one of the two factors of greatest significance as the century closed. The other was the firm establishment of representative institutions in the English islands.

Sugar, rum, cocoa, tobacco, indigo and dyewoods were the staples which found a market from the beginning. The superior energy and efficiency shown by the English and French in managing their plantations gave them a relative mercantile strength much in excess of that of their giant rival. It was counterbalanced only by the boundless territory controlled from Madrid. This assertion takes no account of mining, a field monopolized by Spain.

The political structure set up in Jamaica, Barbados and other Britannic possessions resembled that of the North American colonies. Remarkably liberal for the age, it consisted of an Assembly elected on a franchise narrowed by property qualifications, an appointive Council or Upper House, and the Governor representing the Crown. It could, and did, lead to frequent deadlocks between the Assembly as the mouthpiece of the colonists, and the Governor and Council speaking for purely English interests. As the Assembly had the power of the purse, this body usually got its way. The free-born men who had come to the Tropics as planters and merchants refused to accept tyrannous restrictions which King Charles II tried to impose. He ended by sanctioning for all units what is known in American constitutional history as the Old Representative System. It worked fairly well for two hundred years. That it would not be modernized when the proper time came was a difficulty which no one could foretell in 1700.

## Part Three

### BONANZA AND REVOLUTION

*I swear before you, I swear by the God of my forefathers, I swear by my forefathers, I swear by my native country, that I shall never allow my hands to be idle nor my soul to rest until I have broken the shackles which bind us to Spain.*

—SIMÓN BOLÍVAR

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

#### PIRACY IN THE CARIBBEAN

LIFE on the Caribbean Sea in the Eighteenth Century was molded by four paramount influences: The almost continuous state of war between England on the one hand and Spain, or France—sometimes both of them—on the other; the prevalence of piracy; the metamorphosis of sugar from a struggling trade into one of the richest bonanzas the world of commerce has ever known; and the growth of the slave trade, directly resulting from the demand for labor to produce sugar. Seven Anglo-Spanish wars broke out in that century, in 1702, 1718, 1727, 1739, 1762, 1779 and 1796. Due to the fact that Charles the Bewitched willed his throne to a French Bourbon Prince, Philip V, and that the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-13, did not overturn that choice, the relations of the two Latin nations were good until the dethronement of Louis XVI of France. Whatever wealth England gained in tropical America had to be taken from under their claws.

But the pirates were everyone's foe. When the Peace of Ryswick ended buccaneering, the true wolves of the sea welcomed the decision. Many of them were former Brethren, who had been irked by the theory that they must not plunder their own nationals. As individuals, they had often violated the rule. Now they threw off all pretense, accepted willy-nilly the status of outlaws and launched upon a career of murder for profit that tolerated no qualms. Then was the black flag raised in earnest, the symbol of the skull and crossbones adopted in a spirit of morbid derision. The best efforts of every civilized people



failed to eradicate piracy from the Caribbean until the fourth decade of the Nineteenth Century.

The record of this cutthroat game which has come down to us is prolix, but disjointed. Even if there were space for it, an attempt at a detailed account would be superfluous in a work of this sort. Piracy, unlike buccaneering, had no great political effect upon the region. Its separate manifestations were dramatic enough. To those who had to deal with it year after year, it was a monotonous nuisance. A fair idea of the whole may be had by glancing at some of the scoundrels who went to work gleefully as soon as the new order got under way.

They originated in all parts of Europe and America, and their range was as wide as the commerce routes of the day. They were encountered as far east as the Indian Ocean. Those who sailed the Caribbean found their best markets for stolen goods in North American ports. There was a reason. Instead of liberalizing the trading laws set up for her pioneer colonies, England had drawn closer to the idiocies of Spain. A Navigation Act passed in 1696 excluded all foreign nations from doing business with English possessions. Imports from the Orient were prohibited in Virginia, for instance, unless they had gone by way of England, which made them very much more expensive. The double customs duties collected and the employment given English ships was supposed to be good economics, as well as one of the best reasons for owning colonies. But the inhabitants of the young lands resented it bitterly. They bought illicit merchandise, no matter by whom it was offered. Smugglers and pirates reaped the benefits.

Harbors on lonely reaches of coast, particularly the sounds off North Carolina, became the haunts of the sea-thieves where they outfitted their boats, and to which they returned if pursued too closely by warships. But when they had wares to sell, they boldly entered such ports as Baltimore, New York and Boston, and conducted their business with the connivance of local dignitaries.

The most famous name in piracy is that of William Kidd. His reputation is unmerited, but it sprang inevitably from his capture, trial in London and public execution there. We do not have so complete a court record of the misdeeds of any other prominent villain of his type. He got a big press in the capital of the English-speaking world. Pamphlets and popular songs were written about him during the months that his corpse hung in chains at Execution Dock. Again, he was imagined to have buried treasure within a few miles of New York.

Captain Kidd could scarcely fail to become a conventional synonym for the leader of a skull-and-crossbones crew.

He was a Scotchman who had followed the sea honestly until he was around fifty. Married and the father of several children, he had bought a house in New York, and was an owner of merchant ships. He had sailed legally to the Caribbean as a privateer.

Even before the Peace of Ryswick, the English Government had lost its patience with certain North American pirates who were trafficking between Madagascan waters and points in New England. It ordered the Earl of Bellamont, Governor of Massachusetts, to suppress them, and he adopted the pernicious plan of forming a stock company for the purpose. The expedition was to pay expenses from the goods of the malefactors it was sent to destroy. Any balance of plunder was to be divided by the shareholders.

Bellamont gave the command to Kidd. The latter bought into the venture, to the tune of one-fifth of the whole. When he rounded the Cape of Good Hope at the end of 1696, he did not trouble to hunt his designated quarry, but turned pirate himself and seized a number of vessels. One of these, the *Quedagh Merchant*, carried an extremely valuable cargo. Taking forty per cent for himself and his partners at home, he divided the rest among the 150 members of his crew. Then he sailed back. He called at Anguilla, in the Lesser Antilles, and at a port in Hispaniola, where he heard the bad news that he had been proclaimed a pirate in England.

Perhaps he had misunderstood the Earl of Bellamont, or conceivably the latter could not stand up against the uproar. When Kidd reached Boston in July, 1699, he was immediately arrested on the Earl's orders and sent to London. Following his sensational day in court, he was hanged on May 23, 1701.

That was Captain Kidd, the pirate of a single voyage.

Edward Teach, known as "Blackbeard," and Bartholomew Roberts were much more deserving of notoriety. These two were daring and effective captains who lived up to all the requirements of adventure fiction, the first as a neurotic demon, the second as a leader of real ability who found himself on the wrong side of the law.

Teach is declared by some authorities to have been a native of the Carolinas, and by others to have been born in Jamaica, the son of an English artillery captain. He became a bandit afloat because it was not in his nature to be anything else, and quickly fought his way to the command of a ship. His long, dense beard was a novel adornment in the early Eighteenth Century. He stiffened it with wire, and

is credited with having at times woven tallow wicks into it, which he lighted to make himself look more ferocious.

The fragments of a diary kept by this "Blackbeard" have been preserved. They strike the authentic swashbuckler's note:

"1718. Rum all out. Our Company somewhat sober. . . . A damn'd Confusion amongst us! Rogues a-plotting . . . great Talk of Separation . . . so I look'd sharp for a Prize.

"(Later) Took one with a great deal of Liquor on Board, so kept the Company hot, damn'd hot, then all things went well again."

Charles Leslie wrote of him in 1740:

"He was one of a most bloody disposition, and cruel to brutality. His name became a terror; and some Governors being remiss in pursuing him, he almost put a stop to the trade of several of the Northern Colonies. . . . He was attacked by a Lieutenant of a man-of-war [Robert Maynard, H. M. Sloop *Pearl*] and was killed, after a very obstinate and bloody fight. He took a glass, and drank damnation to them that gave or asked quarter. His head was carried to Virginia, and there fixed on a pole."

When Bartholomew Roberts, a Welshman, was elected captain for the first time, he accepted curtly, with the remark that "since I have dipped my hands in muddy water and must be a pirate, it is better being a commander than a common man." The year 1720, and the place the West Coast of Africa. He had previously been a slaver, and had been forced to join the crew that hijacked him.

Roberts lost no time in demonstrating how piracy should be conducted, from the viewpoint of making it terrifying, efficient and profitable. He enforced a discipline such as his men had never known. Some of his rules seem ingenuous today, but were harsh stuff when promulgated. All lights had to be out by 8:00 P.M., and if the rascals wanted to continue drinking after that hour they must do so above decks. Games played for money were prohibited. Anyone who brought a woman on board disguised as a man incurred the death penalty. Personal quarrels must be settled by means of duels, the opponents standing back to back armed with pistol and cutlass, and never by spontaneous brawling.

The Captain lived austere. He drank only tea. But he understood the psychology of dressing for his part. On ceremonial occasions, and especially before going into action, he donned breeches and a waistcoat of the finest damask, a velvet cap with a red feather in it. A silk sling tossed back like a cape bore two pairs of pistols. A heavy gold

chain and diamond cross about his neck completed the costume. His sword was always naked in his hand.

Darting from West Africa to Bahia, Brazil, he cut out a prize from the midst of forty-two Portuguese merchantmen, which were about to sail for Lisbon. Then he entered the Caribbean and plagued the commerce of all nations for two years. His supposed record of four hundred ships captured should be taken with a grain of salt, yet it is probable that he outdid any other pirate in history. He had his reverses. A ship from Barbados repulsed him, and he was thwarted in an attempt to land on Martinique. These incidents brought out the macabre humor behind the swarthy Welshman's mask. He designed a new flag which portrayed him standing on two skulls, labeled "A B.H." and "A M.H." The initials meant, "A Barbadian's Head" and "A Martiniquian's Head." Whenever he laid hands, thereafter, on an inhabitant of either of these islands, he put him to death.

Roberts passed from the scene in 1722. At the beginning of a fight with an English man-of-war, he was struck in the throat by a grapeshot and killed. His men obeyed one of the standing orders he had given. They immediately threw his body into the ocean, without so much as pilfering his gold chain and cross.

The case of Stede Bonnet appears to have been unique. He was a well-to-do sugar planter in Barbados, who had formerly held the rank of major in the English Army, but had had no seafaring experience. This man must needs equip a vessel, sign on a crew of desperadoes and embark on piracy. He is reputed to have been a bit off his head, a condition "but too visible in him some time before this wicked undertaking, and which is said to have been occasioned by some discomfort he found in a married state." Be that as it may, he bungled his new venture, was quickly taken prisoner and hanged.

Up till the Eighteenth Century, woman interest is sadly absent from the history of the Caribbean. We know that it existed, as in all places and all times. The Vireina, Doña Maria, wife of Diego Columbus, must have been a lady of extraordinary parts to make the first Spanish city in America seem a glittering social center to travelers. Cortés had his Marina, and Balboa his princess in Darién. They emerge feebly from the annals compiled by men whose pre-eminent concerns were war and gold. That is the trouble. But the Eighteenth, which has been called the women's century, told the story differently. Even in piracy one encounters the feminine touch.

Anne Bonney was a sturdily built Irish girl, the illegitimate daugh-

ter of a Cork lawyer who emigrated with her to North Carolina. They lived near Pimlico Sound, one of the chief hideaways of the black-flag rovers. Anne secretly married a common sailor, not a pirate, was disowned in consequence by her father and forthwith deserted by her husband, who evidently had hoped that he would find a soft berth ashore and was by no means interested in supporting a wife. But she caught the eye of one of the most debonair of the irregulars, Captain John Rackham, whose nickname was "Calico Jack." He did not share the prejudices of Bartholomew Roberts. So he dressed Anne in men's clothes and took her on his next cruise, ostensibly as his personal steward. She found that she was not the only woman aboard. Serving as a member of the crew was Mary Read, a tougher specimen than she, but thoroughly congenial. They became fast friends.

Mary was English. She declared she had been brought up as a boy by her adventuress mother. She had enlisted as a cavalryman and fought in the Low Countries, where she fell in love with a fellow trooper. They quit the wars, married and opened a tavern in Holland. On the sudden death of her husband, Mary had resumed male clothes and joined another regiment. Then she got a hankering for the sea, deserted and signed before the mast in a ship bound for the West Indies. "Calico Jack" had seized the boat, and Mary, still pretending to be a man, had switched enthusiastically to the pirate's service. That had been longer than a year before. She had found a sweetheart among her new comrades. The secret of her sex was one no longer. But Captain Rackham had no objection, so long as she performed her duties.

During at least two long cruises, perhaps more, in 1719 and 1720, Anne Bonney and Mary Read fought side by side in every capture of a prize. They are credited with having been among the first in boarding parties, when they wielded their cutlasses without mercy. Rackham paid special attention to the trade out of Jamaica, and was rated by the authorities there "a perfect terror . . . constantly turning up when least expected." He was finally cornered by a coastguard sloop in Negril Bay, at the western end of the island. Many of the pirates were ashore. The few with Rackham lost their nerve and scuttled below deck—all save Anne Bonney and Mary Read who fought until beaten down, bawling curses at their faithless comrades.

All the prisoners were tried at the capital of Jamaica, St. Jago de la Vega, as the English called the town, and sentenced to death on November 28, 1720. Fiery words the girls had used were quoted against them. Mary Read had once said that "as to hanging, she thought it

no great hardship, for, were it not for that, every cowardly fellow would turn pirate and so infest the seas that men of courage must starve."

Nevertheless, according to Gardner, the Jamaica historian, both she and her friend "pleaded for exemption on the ground that they were women and with child. This was found to be the case. Though they had been the most desperate of the band, they were reprieved. Mary Read, however, died in her cell; the other, Anne Bonney, was set at liberty."

Captain Rackham was taken to a speck of emerging coral reef off Port Royal and left to dangle from a tall gallows, where ships' companies passing in and out could see him. The place is still called Rackham's Cay.

Pirate commanders generally played lone hands. A man like Bartholomew Roberts would sometimes have two or three ships. But fleets such as the buccaneers assembled were unknown. By no stretch of the romantic spirit can the sea-thieves be accounted anything but vermin, which the Eighteenth Century endured with what equanimity it could find.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### BIENVILLE FOUNDS LOUISIANA

TEN years after the tragic death of La Salle, Louis XIV and his ministers began to take a renewed interest in the Mississippi River. Reports had been trickling back persistently from Canada to France that the territory through which it flowed was the most valuable that could be acquired in North America. The advantage of having a port on the Gulf of Mexico had long been perceived. But apart from the lethargy of courts, Louis had had at least one good reason for not pressing the conquest. Since 1689 he had been at war with England, Spain and Holland. The year 1697, the year of the taking of Cartagena by Pointis and Du Casse, was also the year of the Peace of Ryswick. Although the latter was to prove no more than a truce in Europe, it had momentous effects in the Caribbean. It threw France and Spain into the same camp for nearly a century. It cleared the way for the founding of a colony on the Mississippi, with England as the only serious objector.

In 1697, however, Louis did not know whom to place in charge of the enterprise. The question was answered for him the following year, when there arrived in France two extraordinary young Canadian brothers, the *Sieur d'Iberville* and the *Sieur de Bienville*. The family name was *Le Moyne*. Their father, a Norman emigrant, had made himself a vast landowner, a trader and Indian fighter of such importance that he had been ennobled and nine of his twelve sons permitted to style themselves "*Sieur*," or "*Lord*," of one of his estates.

Iberville was fresh from a dazzling feat on Hudson Bay, where in the late war he had with a single vessel sunk one English ship, captured another and put a third to flight. Bienville, then only seventeen, had served under him. On the strength of this and other good recommendations, Iberville was summoned to Paris and given the commission to perform efficiently what La Salle, through no fault of his own, had failed to do. He was to take an expedition by sea to the north coast of the Gulf of Mexico and found as large a colony as possible, based on the Mississippi. The English were known to be planning to get there first and colonize with Huguenot exiles. Haste was essential.

Two small frigates and two cargo boats, with one of the King's

corvettes as escort, composed the squadron. In enlisting crews, Iberville gave the preference to Canadians. He wanted tough fighters and trail-breakers, rather than green hopefuls of the kind that had ruined earlier Gallic ventures in Florida, and had proved such a drawback to La Salle. The second in command was the Comte de Surgères, but Iberville appointed Bienville as his personal lieutenant. Laurens de Graff, the buccaneer, now reformed, joined as an officer.

The expedition sailed from Brest on October 24, 1698, and reached Saint Domingue in less than six weeks. It resumed its journey on New Year's Day, 1699, and after passing the western end of Cuba steered straight north for a harbor which old filibusters in the company reported to be an ideal base. It proved to be Pensacola, garrisoned only four months before by the Spaniards. The latter warned Iberville not to take possession of any part of the coast, as it was all included in the province of Florida. Ignoring this, the Frenchman moved westward, came upon the entrance of Mobile Bay, but did not explore it, and decided upon Biloxi as the site of his first settlement. His systematic hunt for the mouths of the Mississippi accomplished their rediscovery by the end of February.

During the ensuing year, the river and some of its tributaries were traced for several hundred miles north. Tonty of the iron hand was encountered, still roving the wilderness and trying to make the dream of La Salle come true. His aid was invaluable. But he was of the past. The personality that almost immediately registered as born to lead, with special aptitude for the problems of the country, was that of the young Bienville. He got along well with the Indians, learned their tongues without difficulty and grasped the inner meaning of their society. As an example of his jaunty yet mature spirit, note the following from his journal, describing hardships as he floundered through virgin country between the Mississippi and Red Rivers, at the head of a band of twenty-two Canadians and seven natives:

"The cane grows so thick in this country that we had to force our way through, which fatigued us very much, having passed the last two nights in the rain, failing to find large trees from which to strip the bark for cabins. . . . A half league from our camp we came to a swamp, a quarter of a league wide, where there was no bottom at six feet, and which was filled with wood, out of which we made rafts to carry our clothes. We were all day in crossing it. . . . My men and I were never so tired in our lives. . . . This is good work for tempering the fires of youth. But



we never stop singing and laughing, to show our guides (Indians) that fatigue does not trouble us, and that we are different men from the Spaniards."

The author of the above lines was not yet twenty-one years old.

Iberville is, of course, the official founder of Louisiana colony, as the French called the region his expedition had visited and a still larger hinterland which they believed to be free of Spaniards. He was a captain and organizer of first-rate ability. But his health suffered from the climate, and this and other circumstances caused him to be absent in France during a large part of the first three years. When he left the second time, in March, 1702, he expected to return. He never did so. Sent to operate from Martinique against the English during the War of the Spanish Succession, he devastated the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, then sailed north with a large force to harass the Carolina coast. On the way he contracted yellow fever, of which he died in Havana, in 1706.

The responsibility of making a success of Louisiana had been delegated to Bienville, and upon his brother's death it was formally his. He spent half his lifetime in the country, rectified initial blunders and performed the work that developed it from an experiment into a great colony. Popular tradition has justly honored him as the true founder.

One of Iberville's few errors had been to place his Mississippi port eighteen leagues from the mouth of the river, at a point which the Indians had assured him was above the flood mark. The contrary had proved to be the case, and the defensive works were frequently inundated, the food crops washed away. Until a better site could be found, Biloxi continued to be the center of operations. It was unsatisfactory, because too exposed to storms from the Gulf. Then Bienville had surveyed Mobile Bay and the rich country surrounding it. On his advice, a fort was built, around which a town grew rapidly. It became his special charge, and on his succeeding to the deputy-governorship in 1702, Fort St. Louis de la Mobile was proclaimed the capital of the new French dominion. The latter's history as a political entity may be said to have commenced at that juncture.

The record is one of adroit handling of the Indians by Bienville, who pitted them against the tribes which often attacked from the northeast at the instigation of the English; of slow growth, so far as planting, trapping and trading were concerned. Help from France was niggardly, except in the summer of 1704 when a ship, *Le Pélican*,

arrived with supplies of every description, seventy-five soldiers, several priests, a nurse, four families of artisans, and twenty-three young girls "reared in piety, and drawn from sources above suspicion, who knew how to work." The last-named were the first white women in the colony. They had been sent out to anchor a few of the settlers and inaugurate domesticity, with children to follow. All but one of them were married within a month, the twenty-third proving to be a panic-stricken virgin who could not be persuaded.

Unfortunately, *Le Pélican* also brought yellow fever, then epidemic at Havana, where she had stopped. There was a heavy mortality, the most prominent victim and greatest loss to the colony being the veteran Tonty. The extent to which this disease scourged the Caribbean region, quenching some ventures before they had fairly started and periodically reducing the populations of cities by huge percentages, is a subject which calls for analysis in a special treatise. The early historians mention it casually as one of the numerous ills of the Tropics. Beginning with the more sensitive Eighteenth Century, we get figures that stagger the imagination. Although two-thirds of its inhabitants caught the yellow fever and half of these died, Mobile knew that it had escaped lightly.

Shortly afterward, the fort on the Mississippi was abandoned. Bienville had chosen a new site almost twice as far from the mouth of the river, the place where New Orleans now stands. Those on the spot realized that his judgment was sound, but the years passed without his being able to get necessary materials from France, or even the permission to go ahead and build a town of logs.

Louis XIV in his old age was becoming disgusted with Louisiana, because instead of bringing him immediate revenue it required money for development. So in 1712, following negotiations that had lasted for two years, he turned it over to the Sieur Antoine de Crozat, a rich courtier, who agreed to maintain it for fifteen years and recoup himself from its products, if any. This absurdity survived little longer than the Roi Soleil himself. It was succeeded by an extravaganza which ranks among the notable frauds of all time, but which did have the effect of causing new citizens to pour into the country and thus assure its future.

The Duc d'Orleans, Regent for the boy King, Louis XV, transferred the Crozat rights to the Company of the West, directed by the fantastic Scotch promoter, John Law. The franchise was issued in September, 1717. It was to run for twenty-five years, during which the Company was to have sole rights of exploitation, including the

working of gold and silver mines and pearl fisheries. The latter did not exist, as Bienville had often reported. It made no difference. All France believed that they must be there, waiting to be discovered. Law, on his part, undertook to introduce six thousand white colonists and three thousand Negro slaves, and to turn back the province in due course, prosperous and free of debt.

Law proceeded to sell stock and land titles to the public. Using ballyhoo methods from which modern publicity men could learn a thing or two, he stimulated a craze for gambling in Louisiana values that swept the nation. This was the Mississippi Bubble. Backed by the Regent, who was paid handsomely in bonuses, Law collected millions from the French people, down to the thriftiest peasants who took the hoarded gold from their stockings. An inflation of the currency was engineered, so that the profits of the inside speculators would be larger. Finally, there was a crash which ruined tens of thousands and almost wrecked the financial structure of the kingdom. The details are to be found in all sagas of the beauties of finance, but scarcely concern this narrative.

The Company of the West, popularly known as the Mississippi Company, was sufficiently well advised to confirm Bienville as Governor. Thus, whatever manias seethed at home and whatever problems were thrust upon Louisiana without warning, the man in charge was at least experienced and could turn the rush of immigrants to account. He received his commission on February 9, 1718. His first act was to go to the crescent-shaped bend on the Mississippi which he had selected so long before, and begin the building of New Orleans. By the middle of June, three hundred settlers, the pioneer batch forwarded by the Company, the forerunners of thousands more, arrived at Biloxi. How had they been obtained? Albert Phelps, the author of *Louisiana*, puts it bluntly:

“The Government went boldly to the task of ransacking the jails and hospitals. Disorderly soldiers, black sheep of distinguished families, paupers, prostitutes, political suspects, friendless strangers, unsophisticated peasants straying into Paris, all were kidnaped, herded, and shipped under guard to fill the emptiness of Louisiana. To those who would emigrate voluntarily the Company offered free land, free provisions, free transportation to the colony and from the colony to the situation of their grants, wealth and eternal prosperity to them and their heirs forever.”

The same writer remarks that "many a shipload of wretchedness was sent to the wilderness as a sacrifice to the new god." He may have had in mind a consignment of eighty-eight girls as prospective wives, the majority of whom had been taken from a house of correction in Paris. Notwithstanding the frontier boom conditions, husbands were slow in offering themselves. Many of the bawdy lasses reverted to the life from which they had come, for, as Bienville wrote, "Whatever the vigilance exercised upon them, they could not be restrained."

By carefully distributing the more solid immigrants from Biloxi to Natchez and retaining a certain proportion in New Orleans, Bienville shaped the colony according to his vision of its future. He had countless disappointments and his governorship was twice interrupted for frivolous reasons, but when the Mississippi Company surrendered its charter in 1731 he had the satisfaction of being appointed to the office again and served until 1743. Louisiana was then one of the most valuable possessions of France, albeit by temperament a Caribbean state and not the virtuous, balanced replica of Canada which the Le Moyne brothers, forty-four years before, had doubtless hoped that it would be.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### COLONIAL CONTRASTS

IN 1702, as the War of the Spanish Succession opened, two chiefs whom we have met crossed swords off Santa Marta on the Main. Admiral John Benbow, friendly observer of the Scotch innocents in Darién, commanding seven ships, ran into Admiral Jean-Baptiste Du Casse, former Governor of Saint Domingue, commanding five. The French, however, had superior weight of metal. Benbow gave orders to attack. With a timidity and mutinous spirit rare in the British Navy, two captains refused to support him and were imitated by three others. He thereupon engaged the enemy singlehanded, except for a small frigate which followed him but was soon put out of action. Due to the eccentricities of the wind, neither side could force a decision, though they fought for five days. Boat parties boarded tenacious old Benbow's vessel three times and were thrown back. At last, his leg broken by a chain-shot, he directed the battle until dark from a cot placed on the quarter-deck, and then withdrew.

Du Casse sent him a letter: "I had little hope on Monday last but to have supped in your cabin, but it pleased God to order otherwise, and I am thankful for it. As for those cowardly captains who deserted you, hang them up; for, by God, they deserve it!" The advice was followed when Benbow got back to Port Royal, Jamaica, where he died of his wound two months later.

The entire episode was typical of the Eighteenth Century and of new policies in the Caribbean. Du Casse was the same man who had led buccaneers to the assault of Cartagena five years before. Now he was in charge of a royal squadron, and if there were any unreformed buccaneers serving under him they were doing so incognito. Civilized warfare had become the rule. Apart from formal sieges and invasions, the business of developing plantations was not hampered. Piracy, after all, was casual and could not strike inland.

In the chapters on sugar and the slave trade, much will be said about colonial methods which were common to all nationalities. But it seems important to note at this point certain political and social factors which differentiated the establishments of Latin peoples from those of the English. The American reader with some grasp of the subject knows

roughly what Jamaica, for instance, was like, because the system was similar to that of the slave-holding colonies in North America. He is not so well informed about the French West Indies.

Until 1714, all the islands and parts of islands occupied by France were loosely grouped under a central administration, with the capital at Martinique. The deputies in such important places as Saint Domingue had much freedom of action. Their functions were largely military, as may be judged by the record of Du Casse. Louis XIV had intended to launch an ambitious tropical program after the Peace of Ryswick had confirmed his title to the western end of Hispaniola, the rich islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Grenada, and lesser footholds. Expansion on the Mississippi had been part of it. But the new war had proved dislocating. When it closed in 1713, the King no longer believed that Louisiana could be made profitable, but was doubly interested in the Antilles. Reforms and the fostering of agriculture started by him were continued under the regency of the Duc d'Orléans.

The Marquis Duquesne came out in 1714 with the title of Governor of the Windward Islands (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Grenada and their dependencies), and shortly afterward an independent executive was appointed for Saint Domingue. Neither colony, of course, received at that time anything resembling popular government. The monarchy at home was absolute, and its agents ruled with the help of councillors of their own choosing, or selected by the King. Contraband trading had been ordered suppressed, and this was done vigorously. Martinique objected to losing illicit profits and in 1717 staged a revolt, led by a colonel, which was stamped out. The islands then settled down under the new regime.

Prosperity greater than they had ever known followed almost at once. This was due to a great boom in the production of sugar in Saint Domingue and the naturalization of the coffee plant, which reached Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1723, ten years before any of the English colonies took up this crop. Other factors, writes E. E. Boyer-Peyreleau, author of *Les Antilles Françaises* (published in 1823), were enlarged trade facilities with France and, above all, the insistence of the authorities that proprietors should live on the land and direct the work themselves. Small holdings were encouraged, as well as a diversity of products. At the outset, the wild spread of the sugar cane, which had become a West Indian mania, was actually checked by the French at certain points, and coffee recommended instead. The growing of food-stuffs also was sponsored, so that the colonies would be self-supporting in periods of economic stress. No more intelligent policy was ever

followed by a European nation in the Tropics. Its effects have lasted through the centuries.

A wit once said: "All generalizations are false—including this one." So the writer is tempted to reduce to a few phrases, amounting to a generalization, the essential differences between the French, Spanish and English colonial systems. *are as follows:*

The French regarded each colony as an addition to France herself. Settlers evinced a strong cult of the soil. Some might choose, as individuals, to return to the old country. But those who remained, their children and descendants, the creoles, were held to be fellow citizens in no way inferior to Frenchmen born in Europe. There was no race prejudice as such, the only degrading condition being that of slavery.

To the Spanish, a colony was a possession of the King, to be exploited for his benefit and that of his favorites. Yet citizens of all classes were needed there to govern, to collect the visible plunder and to produce taxable wealth. With the fierce individualism characteristic of this people, they conceived of their role in two sharply divided categories. An office holder was a European; a settler was a Mexican, a Venezuelan or a Cuban, as the case might be. The first class despised, and the second resented, the other. Each colony became a new Iberian state, but had little sense of filial attachment to Spain. Religious prejudice was sharper than that of race. Human bondage had the mitigations of a feudal institution.

The English held that colonies were fresh fields for merchants and adventurers, fresh markets for English goods. They had some idea of founding permanent offshoots of the realm, but (reference here is strictly to tropical lands) were not successful in this because of certain ingrained attitudes. Their chronic insularity was such that the prosperous flocked back to England and operated as absentee landlords, with resultant waste of colonial resources that grew to be appalling. Those left behind mourned their lot and nostalgically spoke of England as "Home" unto the third and fourth generations. Celtic elements furnished some notable exceptions. Their contempt for other racial strains, particularly the Negro, inhibited the English from having any local pride in the countries they had themselves overstocked with colored slaves. It was a vicious circle.

To sum up more briefly, the French colonized in the way best calculated to develop happy colonies; the Spanish in the way of the leech, while unintentionally creating new nations; and the English in the way that would most exalt and enrich England, while leaving the colonies morally destitute.

The one point over which the French bungled and which eventually cost them Saint Domingue was their conception of slavery. It did not work out with greater severity than that of the English. As a matter of fact, the majority of proprietors maintained kindlier relations with their chattels than were usual in Jamaica or Barbados. But the Government had rigid notions, which it sought to enforce through the famous *Côte Noir*.

The latter was a set of regulations, first promulgated in the Seventeenth Century and modified at later dates. It was applied in Louisiana, as well as in the West Indian colonies. Phelps fairly summarizes its scope and intention when he writes: "The harshest, the most severe penalties were provided and inflicted in case of any act on the part of slaves which tended to endanger the absolute supremacy of the white race, but within these limits the black slave was as fully protected from the tyranny, neglect, oppression or cruelty of his master as was the involuntarily bound servant or even the hired domestic of early Massachusetts."

Several articles of the *Côte* were directed against miscegenation, less because this was considered immoral than because the parents of half-bloods generally emancipated their offspring and the mother, too. The increase in the number of free colored people was thought to be a political and social danger. The first edition of the *Côte* provided that any white man who had an illegitimate child with a black should be fined two thousand pounds of sugar. This penalty seemed to make no difference, and it was not consistently enforced for long.

A more effective modification was adopted in the early Eighteenth Century. If a woman of color were freed, the manumitter had to pay a tax of three times her value as a slave. Thereafter, a planter's mistress was apt to remain nominally in bondage until his death. It would then be found that he had emancipated her and her children by testament, and the fine—when collected—was paid by his heirs. Short of establishing the principle that a person of Negro blood could in no circumstances become a freeman, the object of these regulations could not be brought about. The extreme measure was never attempted, though often discussed.

The English were less worried by the percentage of manumitted Negroes than by the real preponderance of blacks over whites. "Deficiency laws," as they were called, were passed in nearly all the colonies. These required slave-owners to employ a certain number of Caucasians to every hundred Negroes, or pay a fine of a hundred dollars or more per deficiency. The obligatory ratio averaged three per cent of whites, and even this could not be maintained.



"In consequence of the stigma attached to labor in the Tropics," writes Lowell Joseph Ragatz, "desirable individuals could seldom be induced to emigrate. Those persons seeking employment who did reach the Caribbean were generally the very dregs of England, Scotland and Ireland. They were rarely qualified for any type of plantation work, nor were they welcome additions to society. There were 'carpenters' who had never handled a tool, 'bricklayers' who scarcely knew a brick from a stone, and 'bookkeepers' who were unlettered and without more than the most elementary knowledge of numbers. If perchance they were engaged to save a deficiency charge, they all too often fomented unrest among the Negroes. Female servants normally married at an early date and left their employers. By 1770, the demand for indentured Europeans had practically ceased, the deficiency laws had become essentially revenue acts, and there were few white employees other than managers, overseers and bookkeepers to be found in the British Caribbean. Artisans were largely mulattoes."

The system under Cromwell, Charles II and James II of transporting bondsmen, barbarous though it was, had contributed a larger number of useful residents. Many a planter of the type who lived on his estate and put local interests first, was the descendant of an Irish Catholic, a Welsh Royalist, a Scotch Covenanter, or a follower of the Duke of Monmouth whose neck had been spared at the Bloody Assizes.

After 1700, the total number of whites, including the families of landholders, officials, soldiers and sailors, as well as employees, ranged between twenty-five per cent of the population in Barbados, ten per cent in Jamaica and five per cent in some of the lesser islands. Sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less, according to the conditions of the moment.

No comment on race problems in the English possessions would be adequate without mention of the Maroons of Jamaica. We saw that when this great colony was seized in 1655, wild men of color, called Cimarrones, were present in the forested mountains. They had long defended their liberty against the Spaniards, and they continued to do so against the English. They had Arawâk blood, for they were the product of unions dating from the earliest period between runaway slaves and aboriginal women. Hardy recruits joined them under the new regime, including some North American Indians who had been misguidedly shipped out as slaves, but who without exception either died resisting authority or fled to the woods.

The English corrupted the Spanish name for these people to Maroons. The latter kept up a guerilla warfare, which became intense

during the decade from 1728 to 1738, though their fighting force is believed never to have exceeded five hundred. It was at last resolved to compromise with them, and a treaty of peace was arranged. This recognized four areas as Maroon settlements, in which personal freedom and a large degree of self-government were guaranteed. Two white men were to live in each settlement as representatives of the Governor of Jamaica. In return, the Maroons pledged their aid in the event of war or rebellion and promised to capture and return all fugitive slaves thereafter. Among the Maroon names signed to the treaty were the colorful ones of Accompong, Cuffee, Quacco, Cudjoe and Quao. The pattern shifted from time to time. There were other armed clashes. But the Maroons persist as an entity to this day.

The Spanish colonies were accustomed to making concessions like the above. They allowed the unassimilable San Blas Indians of the Isthmus of Panama and Guajiro Indians of Nueva Granada to solve their own destinies. The case of the Maroons is extraordinary because it occurred under the sovereignty of England, who detested granting any form of autonomy in slave territory to a dark-skinned group.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### THE APOGEE OF SUGAR

THE English, French and Dutch penetrated the Caribbean in search of trade, then acquired colonies there to solidify their position as rivals of Spain. It was discovered that sugar, a scarce product in the European market and beyond the means of ordinary folk, could be grown to perfection virtually anywhere at sea level in that region. The Spaniards had introduced the cane, but with their usual torpor concerning all sources of wealth except gold had not planted it extensively. The English took up its cultivation as their chief crop, followed with less emphasis at the start by the French, Dutch and Danes. Suddenly a tremendous vogue for sugar swept the Old World. From a luxury it became a popular necessity, high-priced as compared with its cost today, but cheaper than it had ever been before. A bonanza had materialized as if by magic. It was to be a West Indian monopoly for a long time to come.

Production was limited only by the land available. Vast territory lay comparatively idle in Spanish hands, for even Cuba which had begun to subsist on sugar had been scarcely scratched. England possessed Jamaica and France the western end of Hispaniola, both of which were big enough to turn around in. For the rest, the northern powers had only the small islands of St. Kitts, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Lucia, Barbados, Grenada and a few others; and the Guiana coast, which amounted to a strip less than ten miles deep, reclaimed from the tropical jungle. Trinidad was still Spanish. The thin soil of the Bahamas was unsuited to sugar cane.

The smallness of these holdings becomes startling when we reduce them to square miles. Jamaica is about the same size as the state of Connecticut, and the Saint Domingue of the French equals Maryland. But Barbados is just twenty-one miles long by fourteen broad, with a total area of 166 square miles. Guadeloupe and Martinique, notably the largest of the Lesser Antilles, have areas of 583 square miles and 385 square miles respectively. Dominica comes next with 304 square miles. Grenada is 133 square miles, and Antigua 108. There are tinier Caribbean units, however, which have made a noise in history, have been fought over and rated prizes by the treaty makers. St. Kitts is only

68 square miles. Nevis, the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton, is 50 square miles. St. Martin, which the French and Dutch valued so much that their division of it still stands, is 38 square miles. St. John, one of the Virgin Islands bought from Denmark by the United States, is 21 square miles.

Such were the properties which caused the nations furiously to envy one another, on account of sugar. They were considered more precious than gigantic colonies elsewhere. In 1700, England attached greater importance to Jamaica than to New England. France preferred the Windward Islands to Canada.

The boom commenced in the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century, and despite the wars increased steadily during the first quarter of the Eighteenth. It soared to its apogee around 1750, for although production was even greater thirty years after that, the business was not so consistently profitable, due to deterioration of the soil, the competition of newly opened regions, and fluctuating prices.

To use Jamaica as an illustration, Gardner writes that "in 1675 seventy small plantations were reported, but the average production of each was inconsiderable. In 1739 there were 429 estates, yielding 33,000 hogsheads of sugar and 13,200 puncheons of rum. In a little more than twenty years after, the estates had increased to 640, and the production was close upon 45,000 hogsheads of sugar and 22,400 puncheons of rum." He quotes prices which reveal that raw sugar sold in London during this period at from twenty-five to forty-seven shillings a hundredweight, according to quality, with seventy-three shillings reached in one year when naval warfare was raging. Another authority states that 106 shillings was attained in 1782. Forty shillings (eight dollars) a hundredweight may be regarded as the average price, which works out at a fraction less than ten cents a pound wholesale, a nice figure in view of the great purchasing power of money at that time. The freight rate on sugar from Jamaica to London was around one dollar a hundredweight. The planter seldom operated on less than six hundred acres of land, valued at from \$150,000 to \$200,000, and calculated on a profit of ten per cent, or from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year.

Bryan Edwards, Edward Long and other British West Indian historians agree that methods of agriculture did not keep pace with scientific discoveries, or even with the knowledge gained by practical experience. There was a kind of efficiency, which amounted to using large gangs of slaves on every trivial job, draining the fields until they were exhausted, and then transferring to virgin soil.

Plows were thought superfluous. Negroes were put to clearing brush with machetes and digging trenches with hoes. The cane cuttings were set out a few inches apart, and that ended the process. Few planters troubled to fertilize the soil. Weeding was done by hand, an endless task; the harvesting of the stalks with the eternal machete. The first year's crop would be the largest, for no re-cultivation was undertaken while a field would produce anything. The following season, shoots called ratoons would spring up around each parent stalk. These yielded decreasing quantities of sugar with each growth, but were depended upon for three and sometimes four years. At the end, the fields looked like tangled thickets.

"Juice was extracted by grinding the stalks between rollers commonly operated by cattle, mules or horses," writes Ragatz. "Such apparatus was clumsy, much of its force was lost in friction and canes were often not squeezed dry. Boiling was carried on in open coppers. The resulting syrupy mass was allowed to granulate and after draining, which removed much of the molasses, the raw, or muscovado, sugar was packed in hogsheads for shipment to overseas refineries. Rum was distilled both from the scum arising during boiling and from molasses, and was run into puncheons for transportation to market."

Rum, incidentally, is a word of West Indian derivation, as one might expect for the name of a beverage created in Caribbean territory and brought to such excellence in the aged brands of Jamaica and Haiti. The original was "rumbullion." Describing Barbados in 1676, a traveler wrote: "The chief fuddling they make in the island is Rumbullion, alias Kill-Divil, and this is made of sugar canes distilled, a hot, hellish and terrible liquor."

The resident planters were noted for their excessive eating and drinking, addiction to gambling and improvident habits generally. They had few innocent amusements except dancing, and horseback riding and racing. The duel, with sword or pistol, was so widespread that it might almost have been rated as a sport. Until the middle of the Eighteenth Century, country houses had no pretensions to style, architecturally or otherwise, and life was lived half outdoors on deep verandas, or in rooms where windows screened with jalousie blinds occupied most of the wall space, and all the doors stood open. Bedrooms were generally whitewashed and sparsely furnished.

Slaves catered to the wants and whims of each man, woman and child of a planter's or merchant's family. It was not a matter of one servitor to a communal task. Every duty was duplicated, with the master enjoying the offices of several bondsmen, from valet to groom;

the mistress two or three maids; and each child a nurse, or an attendant of his own age as serving companion and flatterer. This constituted the real luxury of tropical manners.

When the colonial went to London or Paris, he took slaves with him and enhanced his state with all the pageantry that civilization could afford. "As rich as a West Indian planter!" was a catchword in Europe, and the meaning thereof was sugar. Thomas Lynch, one of the early Governors of Jamaica and a pioneer cane-grower, appeared at the Court of King Charles II flaunting the richest costumes and riding in a great coach with horses decked in gilded harness and silver-shod. He advanced the King £50,000, and was shortly afterward knighted, Charles not being in the habit of repaying loans in cash.

George III, a century later, while visiting Weymouth with his Minister, Pitt, saw a pompous equipage with coachman and out-riders in livery as splendid as that of his own service. On learning that it belonged to a West Indian planter, he lost his temper and cried: "Sugar, sugar, eh—all *that* sugar! How are the duties, eh, Pitt, how are the duties?"

Purchases by the North American colonies, chiefly in the form of crude molasses for the manufacture of rum, were an important factor to the English islands, and for a while to the French and Dutch, in the first half of the Eighteenth Century. The islands took in return huge quantities of dried fish from New England, staves and hoops for barrels, flour and biscuits. A low grade of pickled fish, at a derisory price, was thought indispensable as slave provender.

But the continentals gave the preference to French molasses, which was cheaper for good reasons. The superior agricultural methods of Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe and Martinique produced a large yield; in the first-named colony, for instance, irrigation was being practiced, whereas Jamaica had not yet heard of it. In addition, Louis XIV had imitated some of the economic fallacies of the Spaniards. He had ruled that molasses and rum from his own colonies must not enter France, in order that the kingdom's brandy distillers might be protected. This had caused a large surplus of the very type of molasses that North America wanted.

In 1733, the English Parliament retaliated by passing a bill which forbade the continentals to buy sugar from any but British sources. Unpopular in Boston and New York, and widely evaded, it nevertheless helped raise the planters it was designed to benefit to the very heights of affluence. Their representatives, indeed, had brought the question to a head in London. This was the first of many laws forced

through by the West India Interest, as it was called, consisting of absentee landlords and English merchants who traded with the islands. Before long, they elected members of their group to the House of Commons, mainly by buying "rotten boroughs."

Lord Chesterfield failed to get a seat for his son in 1767, though he had been willing to pay the go-between £2,500, and wrote the young man gloomily that "he [the jobber] laughed at my offer, and said, That there was no such thing as a borough to be had now; for that the rich East and West Indians has secured them all, at the rate of three thousand pounds at least; but many at four thousand; and two or three, that he knew, at five thousand." A little earlier, Benjamin Franklin, lobbying at Westminster, had complained that "the West Indians vastly outweigh us of the northern colonies."

So formidable a bloc got what it wanted until a sadder day, when a new school of economists turned upon sugar planters and put through fiscal legislation that proved crippling. It will be seen that the adoption of free trade by England in the Nineteenth Century destroyed the remnants of their bonanza.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### THE SLAVE TRADE

[PHYSICAL conditions and the moral attitude of the times being what they were, it was inevitable that Negro slaves should be introduced into the Caribbean region. But if it had not been for sugar, comparatively few of these bondsmen would have been brought. Solely because of sugar, certain territories became African labor camps run by a small percentage of Caucasians for the latter's benefit. Not merely a black peasantry of the future, but a black majority population up to and including the middle class, was thus naturalized about the furrows of the cane. The truth of this assertion is manifest today.]

The Spaniards at first imported Negroes for other reasons than sugar. But no former Spanish possession, except the Dominican Republic, is dominated numerically by Negroes. Their strength in the Dominican Republic is due to an early overflow from Saint Domingue, the French half of the island, now Haiti. Cuba, which swung heavily to sugar, has a considerable Negro minority, Puerto Rico a smaller one, and the mainland countries a handful along the coast. But Jamaica, Haiti, Barbados and all the other sugar bowls of the past, exploited by England, France, Holland and Denmark, have overwhelming Negro majorities.

The factor is all the more impressive because the slaves did not prove fertile in the West Indies, until they had become thoroughly acclimatized and had mentally accepted their condition. The death rate far exceeded the birth rate among those of foreign origin, and to keep up the slave population, it was necessary to import Africans in ever increasing numbers.

"It is idle to mourn over the events of the irrevocable past," declared Gardner unctuously, "but it is impossible to overlook the fact that, if sugar had not become the chief staple of this magnificent island [Jamaica], it would in all probability have become the home of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen and men of English ancestry, who in farming occupations, and the cultivation of what is now called minor products, would have founded a colony almost if not quite equal to those on the northern continent . . . would in time have made Jamaica what their countrymen were making the New England States of America."



The above, of course, confuses the truth with a fundamental absurdity. A great influx of northerners bent on tilling the soil themselves would never have occurred in a tropical island, and the social atmosphere could not possibly have come to resemble that of New England. The proper comparison is with the Southern States, and especially with Louisiana. The plantation system would still have been followed, but the crops would not have necessitated such hordes of field laborers. The ratio of whites and blacks in the non-Spanish West Indies and Dixie is governed by the differing economic problems of growing sugar cane in the old wasteful fashion, and cultivating tobacco or cotton.

The slave trade to the Caribbean was at first in the hands of the Portuguese, because only they had holdings on the West Coast of Africa when the traffic started at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. They sold small lots of Negroes in Spain, and these were shipped out from Cádiz on order. In 1517, Charles V, King and Emperor, granted a patent to a group of his favorites to export four thousand slaves to the Greater Antilles. The "black ivory" had to be obtained for a number of years longer from the Portuguese. The Spaniards commenced, around 1540, to do some trapping of Africans on their own account. After the smuggling ventures of John Hawkins in the 1560's, the Madrid Government uncompromisingly barred alien slaving competition from all its colonies, and from the Caribbean in particular. Needless to say, this did not abolish private dealers, but it checked them.

With the appearance of the English, French and Dutch as colonizers in the Seventeenth Century, there was a breakdown of the Spanish policy. Not only did the newcomers fetch Negroes from the source of supply, but they bought them from the Spaniards—or sold them, according to the needs of the moment. Free trade in this one commodity was tolerated at certain centers, the open markets of the Dutch at Curaçao and St. Eustatius, for instance. When comparatively good feeling prevailed, Santo Domingo City was known to sell Negroes to the English.

King James I issued the first exclusive slaving charter to Englishmen in 1618. The company failed, and a new enterprise was sanctioned by Charles I in 1631. Under Charles II there was a Royal African Company, headed by the Duke of York with the King as partner. This concern formed so close a relationship with the Asiento, or Spanish monopoly, that subsequent to the Truce of Ratisbon it became almost a merger. A native of Barcelona, naturalized an English subject

as James Castile and knighted, was for years the representative of the Asiento with headquarters at Port Royal.

In 1688, the English Parliament opened slaving to a number of companies, which in practice were forced to work through the Asiento. But the business of the last-named itself was turned over to England as one of the provisos of the Treaty of Utrecht which ended the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713. This must be accounted an ironic reversal; it transferred control to the nation which less than a century later was to compel the abolition of the trade. Under the agreement, 4,800 Negroes could be sold per annum in America for thirty years, and the English were also allowed to send one ship of five hundred tons, with manufactured goods, to the fairs of Porto Bello and Vera Cruz. In 1750, the Asiento agreement was canceled on payment by Spain of £100,000. Slaving became a free-for-all, and if anything the African end of the commerce was handled more callously than it had ever been.

Louis XIV authorized his people in 1673 to take part in the traffic. Ships under the French flag, sometimes co-operating with the Dutch and sometimes with the Spanish Asiento, furnished Saint Domingue and the other colonies for the next hundred years at an average rate of 30,000 Negroes a year. The figure is that given by Boyer-Peyreleau and produces a total of 3,000,000. It may be an exaggeration.

But it is a matter of record that from 1700 to 1786, the English brought to Jamaica alone 610,000 slaves, of whom about 160,000 were sold for export. At this rate, rather more than 5,000 per year were retained in the country. The banner year appears to have been 1732, when about 10,000 were retained.

When slaving began, prisoners of war and criminals were acquired from the African chiefs. The latter soon met increasing demands by selling minor offenders and unfortunates they had kidnaped from near-by villages. Then came the era of man hunts, drives on a large scale which swept the coast lands clear of all except the marauding chiefs and their followers. A favorite ruse was to set fire to a cluster of huts by night and seize the inhabitants as they reeled out of the smoke and flames. Wars were now fought for the express purpose of obtaining human currency to be bartered for western commodities. The captives were held in stockades, called barracoons, where the sea captains looked them over and made their selections. The mortality in these places was very high, due to ghastly sanitary conditions endured in chains.

Exclusive of the slaves who died before they were shipped from

Africa, states one authority, twelve and a half per cent were lost on the voyage, four and a half per cent succumbed at Caribbean ports before they were sold, and thirty-three and a third per cent did not survive the process of "seasoning" on the plantations. Of every hundred who left Africa, therefore, seventeen died in about nine weeks, and only fifty became acclimatized laborers.

Bloodcurdling descriptions have been written of the "middle passage," or period aboardship, and it must have been pretty bad if twelve and a half per cent of the living freight perished. "On the larger ships, there was no more humanity than on the smaller ones," writes Charles William Taussig, in *Rum, Romance and Rebellion*, "for the black men were packed in rows between the decks with the roof only three feet, ten inches above the floor on which they lay. With from ten to sixteen inches' surface room for each, they often had to lie spoon fashion. It must not be forgotten that the voyages frequently took several months. At times they were packed so that the head of one slave would rest between the thighs of another, and thus they would remain for weeks during the voyage across the ocean."

But let us glance at the more rosy picture offered by L. J. Ragatz, derived from Bryan Edwards and others, which seems to be dispassionate:

"Cargoes contained few children and from two to five times as many males as females. Separation of sexes prevailed. The men were brought on board fettered, but their chains were removed some distance out at sea, while women were seldom shackled, even at the outset. All blacks were kept between decks at night and during stormy weather. This space was confessedly narrow, but it was ventilated and was washed and disinfected each morning. The slaves were required to bathe on rising, food was supplied in generous quantities, and a surgeon was in attendance to care for the sick. The days were spent in the open air, with music and other diversions being freely indulged in.

"That evils did exist cannot be denied. The temptation to overcrowd was great, quarters were never roomy, provisions and water now and then ran short, the loss of life from epidemics was sometimes serious. Yet such events were the exception rather than the rule; the captains and crews of slavers were not the inhuman monsters pictured by opponents of the trade. Transporting Negroes to the Caribbean was merely one form of commerce to them. . . . Such inhumanities as there were arose from the home Government's failure to regulate the traffic. If the Africans suffered hardships and the mortality among them was high, it must be

acknowledged that the same was true with respect to the white seamen removing them to their new homes."

Salient variations existed among the bondsmen imported from Africa, for they came from a dozen or more major tribes and innumerable subdivisions. This explains the fact, puzzling to tourists, that a West Indian Negro today is not a uniform type. A Haitian of the ruling class is apt to be a very different person from a Barbadian field hand. The peasants of one section may have a physique, complexion and mannerisms that set them apart from those living twenty miles away. Although cross-breeding among slaves was almost as widespread as the opportunities for it, plantations were often stocked with Negroes whose tribe the owner preferred. Individuals of the vigorous strains rose to be headmen wherever they worked, and if emancipated they instinctively drew together. Southerners in the United States are familiar with these gradations among Negroes. Northern city dwellers are not, and when they go traveling in the Caribbean they expect every colored person they see to be cast out of the same mold.

The racial groups most largely drawn upon were the Coromantees (or Coromantyns), Dahomeans, Mandingoes, Senegalese, Whydahs, Nagoes, Pawpaws, Eboes, Congoes and Angolans. The first two were war-like and stubborn; they made good personal servants, if well treated, but plotted rebellion when forced into gang labor. Broadly speaking, the Coromantees, with their offshoots, the Fantees and Ashantees, found their way to Jamaica and a few other British islands; the Maroons gained many recruits from the ranks of these enslaved warriors. Saint Domingue got the majority of the Dahomeans, who furnished leaders when the day of revolution came, and probably were responsible for introducing the darkest form of voodoo.

The Mandingoes came from that part of the African coast lying north of Sierra Leone. They were Mahommedans, fairly gentle, well formed with sometimes an Arabic cast of countenance, but unwilling to work hard except as foremen. The Senegalese were intelligent, and best fitted to be trained as artisans and domestic servants.

Plantation owners, when they could pick and choose, bought Whydahs, Nagoes, Pawpaws, Congoes and Angolans. These all made diligent, tractable slaves. The first three were noted for their good humor, while the last two were dull.

But the Eboes, from the Bight of Benin, cheapest of black human flesh, simply flooded the market and were bought in every Caribbean country for lack of better material. They were commonly enslaved

in Africa by stronger peoples of their own color. When transferred to the New World, they took their bondage as a matter of course, but were subject to melancholia because of the strangeness of the setting and frequently committed suicide.

The females made the more industrious workers on the soil, a fact of which overseers took full advantage, with the concession that at least Eboe women did not need to be flogged. The indolent males were handled brutally, since they were regarded as poor investments who might as well be driven until they died. The mass tragedy of the Negro under slavery in the American Tropics is largely the tragedy of the Eboes.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### SIEGES OF CARTAGENA AND HAVANA

CARTAGENA of the Indies, nerve-center of the Spanish Main, ravished by Drake in 1586, and by Pointis and Du Casse in 1697, endured a third great assault in the Eighteenth Century. Its ordeal was part of a wide-flung defensive which followed the pattern that the old days had known. England had resolved once more to break the power of Spain in the Caribbean. Several fortified cities had been chosen for humiliation, but although the armed forces brought into play were the most numerous to date, although the methods of warfare were beginning to attain a frightful efficiency, the sprawled Iberian structure managed to last, with some losses that were on the cards in any event.

The terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, under which the English enjoyed a monopoly of the slave trade and the right to take part in the fairs of Porto Bello and Vera Cruz, had not been faithfully observed by them. There had been a good deal of smuggling. Philip V of Spain tightened the restrictions, treated contrabandists roughly, and at last announced his intention of canceling the Asiento. The war party in England, on the *qui vive* for an excuse, clamored for immediate hostilities. Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, was for peace, and he refused for some time to be budged. There ensued the fantastic incident of Captain Jenkins' ear.

A member arose in the House of Commons, in the spring of 1739, and waved a leathery object, concerning which his eloquence soared. While peacefully trading off the Main some three years before, he said, a merchant skipper had been stopped by a Spanish *guarda costa*, his ship confiscated and himself brutally manhandled. One of his ears had been sliced off. He had had the presence of mind to reclaim and preserve the part in alcohol, and had carried it about with him as a proof of outrage and a symbol of vengeance. He, the speaker, held that ear in his hand. He had asked the victim what his thoughts had been while he was suffering mutilation, and had received the inspiring answer, "I recommended my soul to God and my cause to my country." Surely England would not fail her misused subject, whose name was Robert Jenkins.

A superficial inquiry would have turned up the fact that, in Jamaica, where Captain Jenkins had inherited an estate, he was known for his robbery of treasure from a wrecked galleon which the Spanish owners were themselves trying to recover. Jenkins had captured one vessel, driven away the rest, looted the personal effects of the Spaniards, and taken all the bullion he could find. On a complaint to the Governor of Jamaica, a warrant for his arrest had been issued, but had not been served because he had fled the island. This, significantly, had occurred before the affair of the ear.

No one in Parliament troubled about the antecedents of Jenkins, though a few skeptics cast doubts on the exhibit. Was it a true relic of the Captain's anatomy? The carping made little difference. A human ear unquestionably had been displayed, and Jenkins was short one. For several days, supporting orators bawled that the Spaniards must be chastised. Petitions to the same effect were filed by wrathful citizens. Amid scenes of great excitement, Walpole was forced to yield, and war was declared on June 15, 1739. It is called irreverently the War of Jenkins' Ear.

Among the legislators who had demanded action most vociferously was Captain Edward Vernon, a naval officer of good family whose career had been distinguished both at sea and in the House. The reprisal he favored was the seizure of Porto Bello, which he vowed that he would take with only six ships, if given the chance. The Government called on him to make good, appointed him a Vice-Admiral and sent him to the Caribbean one month after the outbreak of war, in command of a squadron of nine vessels carrying a total of 550 guns and 3,700 men. His instructions were to "destroy the Spanish settlements in the West Indies and to distress their shipping by any method whatever." It was privately understood that he was to attempt the capture of Cartagena as well as Porto Bello, and in the event of success on the Main to attack Havana.

Vernon detached four of his craft for commerce chasing before he reached Port Royal, which was to be his base. He found two frigates there, bringing his strength back to seven, and with that number he started for Porto Bello in November. Yet he had promised to do the job with six, a point he had not forgotten. He sent one ship in the direction of Cartagena, to act as a scout.

Henry Morgan had conquered Porto Bello by marching overland and surprising it from the rear. This feat had since been imitated. But no one had ever reduced the great fortress at the harbor mouth, San Felipe de Sotomayor, nicknamed by the Spaniards "Todo Fierro (All

Iron)." Vernon coolly ranged in battleline on November 21 off Sotomayor and pounded it with incessant broadsides. There were two small Spanish men-of-war in the port, but they proved ineffective. In a few hours, the "iron" fort surrendered. It and the other defenses of the town chanced to be seriously undermanned. The rebuilt castles of San Jerónimo and La Gloria, which Morgan had stormed, capitulated the next morning without facing fire.

Three ships, a large quantity of munitions and about \$10,000 cash were carried back to Port Royal as loot. Vernon had kept his word to the letter. He had taken Porto Bello with *six* ships. The effect was to exalt him beyond all reason as a popular hero. Both Houses of Parliament voted thanks to him. Medals were struck, literally in hundreds of designs, to honor him and his exploit.

A few months later, he launched a trial bombardment of Cartagena, but received some damage to his smaller ships and had the sense to withdraw. He proceeded instead to Chagres on the Isthmus, which he battered into submission, collecting merchandise and brass guns as tribute.

The greater part of 1740 was spent in preparing for the siege of Cartagena. The venture took on gigantic proportions for those days. Rear-Admiral Sir Chaloner Ogle arrived from England to serve under Vernon, with a formidable squadron. Transports brought thousands of regular soldiers from Europe and about 3,600 volunteers from the North American colonies. Commanding a Virginia regiment was Colonel Laurence Washington, half-brother of George Washington. Governor Trelawny of Jamaica furnished a contingent of Negroes, led by whites. The armada which finally sailed in three divisions at the end of January, 1741, consisted of 124 sail, of which thirty were ships-of-the-line, twenty-two frigates, and the rest fire-ships, bomb-ketches, sloops and supply vessels. There were 15,000 sailors aboard and rather more than that number of land troops. The army chief was General Thomas Wentworth, a second-rate officer who unfortunately quarreled with Vernon most of the time.

England was also on bad terms with France, the ally of Bourbonized Spain, and a powerful French fleet was expected in the Caribbean. Reconnoitering to make sure that it was not within striking distance was cautiously performed. Finding the way clear, Vernon assembled his whole force at the southwestern end of Hispaniola and maneuvered for three weeks, to get his men into ocean trim. He had fine qualities as a blue-water Admiral, but should never have conceived of himself in an empire-maker's role. On February 25, the fleet stood for its destina-

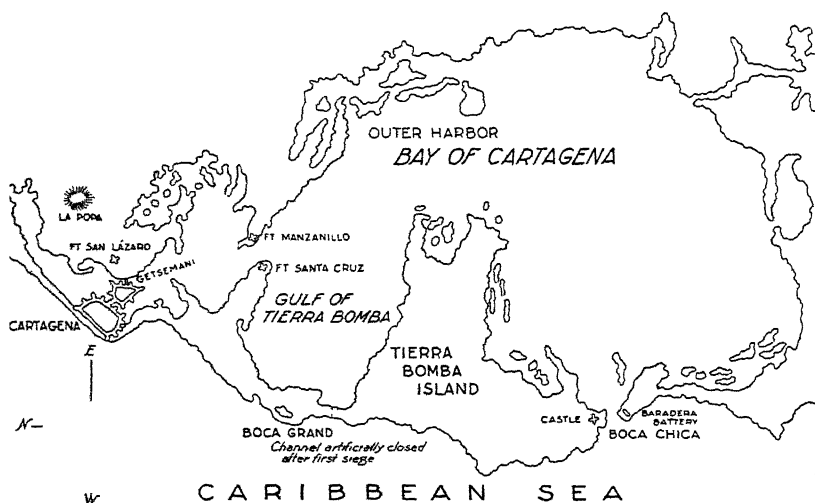


tion under easy sail, and in seven days anchored some miles to the east of it, near Punta Canoas.

There is an extensive literature on the Cartagena campaign. The novelist Tobias Smollett was aboard one of the ships as a surgeon's mate. He painted an unforgettable picture in *Roderick Random*. Official reports are detailed, and the narratives of survivors remarkably colorful. From our point of view, the interest lies in comparing this third onslaught with the two preceding ones. (See Chapter Thirteen for Drake's coup, and Chapter Twenty for that of Pointis and Du Casse.)

With the possible exception of the Morro at Havana, the grand ramparts of Cartagena constituted the most redoubtable fortress in the Spanish Indies. It had been strengthened since 1697. All the outlying forts, particularly San Lázaro, had been brought up to date and new ones built. The Boca Grande remained closed. The Boca Chica bristled with guns, for in addition to the castle there were now three works on the ocean shore of Tierra Bomba Island, while across the strait from the castle stood the Baradera Battery of twenty guns, and Fort San José. The inner harbor was watched by Forts Santa Cruz and Manzanillo, on either shore.

But the garrison fell short of the needs of so complicated a system. There were 1,100 veteran soldiers, 300 militia, 600 Indians and two



The Siege of Cartagena

companies of Negroes to guard the miles of walls, operate the guns and meet emergencies. The six ships in port had 600 sailors and 400 soldiers. The Spanish forces, including last-minute volunteers, may have been 4,000 men, or less than one-seventh of the English total. Their hopes rested on their prodigiously thick stone-and-iron breastworks, and on their ancient ally, Yellow Jack. Don Sebastián de Elsada, the Viceroy of Nueva Granada himself, commanded.

Vernon's initial strategy was impeccable. He had a few small vessels make a pretense of landing troops near the town, the feint causing the expected concentration of the foe at an isolated spot. Then he swept with two divisions of the fleet along Tierra Bomba, and silenced in quick succession the forts east of Boca Chica Castle. This was accomplished with broadsides from his largest ships, some of which were in the eighty-gun class. The sites were occupied by grenadiers, and several thousand troops disembarked under Wentworth. The General was required to take the Castle at once, but although he could have moved on March 11, he failed to do so until the twenty-fourth. He spent the interval wrangling with the naval chiefs, his theory being that they must co-operate with him at every step. His encampment, badly chosen, was under fire from the Baradera Battery as well as the Castle, and his idle soldiers suffered heavily.

In a fury, Vernon erased the works on the opposite peninsula, by sheer weight of metal rained on them. This showed the Spaniards that the outer harbor could not be held. They began to draw off the Castle's garrison, and they sank two hulks in the main channel leading to the inner harbor. When Wentworth at last carried Boca Chica, he won a half victory, because few stores and fewer prisoners fell into his hands.

The mercurial nature of the Admiral, however, reacted joyously. He forwarded a dispatch to London, in which he said: "The wonderful success of this evening and night is so astonishing that one cannot but cry out with the psalmist, it is the Lord's doing, and seems marvelous in our eyes!"

It was now April 1. Vernon brought his entire fleet into the bay during the next few days and discovered, as his predecessors had done, that this was scarcely ten per cent of the problem in vanquishing Cartagena. A survey of the approaches made it clear that Drake's path to the bastions and over them could no longer be trodden by flesh-and-blood, and that Santa Cruz, or the Castillo Grande as it had come to be called, was not to be outflanked in the way achieved by Pointis. But there was a new road behind Fort Manzanillo, which led to the city, passing under the walls of San Lázaro to the Getsémani Bridge. This made it possible

to ignore La Popa, the hill which Du Casse's buccaneers had seized. But San Lázaro was the obstacle it had ever been, how great an obstacle in 1741 both Vernon and Wentworth were far from comprehending. They counted on the memory that it had fallen easily to Du Casse.

A landing in overwhelming force was made around April 3, while Vernon's naval cannon swept the countryside between Manzanillo and San Lázaro. But the regiments were shot through with fever, and they were no sooner in their camps than the death rate began to reach terrifying figures. The American colonial troops had been left on the ships, because the chiefs regarded them as poor material and probably disloyal. It is proper to add that the three companies from Maryland had aroused the suspicions of Vernon, solely on account of the many Roman Catholics among them; but he had a high regard for Colonel Washington and his Anglican Virginians. Wentworth called for the lot in desperation on April 6. He admitted later that they behaved with exceptional valor. Their losses by yellow fever ashore, immediate and numerous, he did not trouble to count.

Stung from his vacuous contemplation of San Lázaro—which he declared should be breached by the ships, an impossibility unless they fired from the inner harbor, where they would have been sunk infallibly by the great guns on the city wall—Wentworth yielded to a majority vote and ordered the fort stormed. But he did not learn in advance which was its weakest and most approachable side. He blundered against the almost perpendicular southern wall, and his scaling ladders were too short. There resulted the most bitter drama that English troops ever enacted in the Caribbean. It differed from the failure of Venables at Santo Domingo in 1655 as a tragedy differs from farce. The troops of Venables should have won; their excuses for defeat were contemptible leadership and their own poltroonery. At San Lázaro the generalship was again bad, but the goal was unconquerable and the men who strove for it were heroes.

Wave after wave broke on the escarpment, crumbled at the foot of the wall. Whole regiments stood under a blinding cataract of tropical sunlight, waiting to attack, and were decimated by point-blank fire from the parapet and loop-holes. Of seven thousand who saw action before San Lázaro on April 9, half died. Wentworth was forced to order a complete withdrawal as the afternoon waned. The survivors returned to a camp where their sick comrades were perishing of fever by scores each hour.

Vernon was appalled. He summoned his naval division commanders to a council of war, which decided that in view of the defeat on land

and the losses by disease, "it shall be for the King's service to desist from the enterprise as impracticable." Wentworth and his officers held their own council, at which they blamed the fleet, while admitting failure. The troops were re-embarked, prisoners were exchanged, and after a sudden blossoming of courtesies between himself and the Viceroy Elsada, Vernon took himself off. He had lost about ten thousand men from all causes.

It was not the end. He went to Guantánamo, Cuba, where he toyed with the idea of assailing Santiago, but changed his mind. Back in Jamaica, he wrestled with a yellow-fever epidemic brought by his own sick, which spread to the civilian population. Three thousand more soldiers arrived from England, and feeling elated he decided that he would capture Panama. Early in 1742, he actually returned to Porto Bello, which he reoccupied as the point from which to march overland. The persistent specter of Yellow Jack deterred him. The new men were dying fast. Presently he had only two thousand available. Choking down his vanity, he returned to England, to report total casualties of twenty thousand and nothing gained. The war as a whole had merged with that of the Austrian Succession and, as between England and Spain, it ended indecisively in 1748.

Though it occurred during a later conflict, the siege of Havana must be regarded as part of the plan which Vernon had tried to carry out and which had never been abandoned. England and France started to fight the Seven Years' War in 1756, and as it drew toward its close Spain signed the treaties of the Family Compact with France, this being tantamount to an offensive and defensive alliance. England took instant advantage of it, so far as the Caribbean was concerned. A fleet of overwhelming strength—almost two hundred vessels, including warships and transports—was sent to Jamaica in 1762, under the command of Admiral George Pocock. There were fourteen thousand soldiers aboard with the Duke of Albemarle as General. But it was designed to make this a campaign of colonial expansion, largely waged by colonials. On the urging of London, the Jamaican legislature formed several regiments of Negroes, slaves as well as freemen, and the white youth of the island rushed to obtain officers' commissions. The North American colonies were asked to raise a contingent.

Havana was the objective. That city had not been taken, or even seriously menaced in war, since the building of its tremendous Morro Castle at the end of the Sixteenth Century. The English now boasted freely that they could, and would, reduce it to avenge Vernon. The touch of bombast, which had been typical of their navy since the rout

of the Invincible Armada, had seldom been more obvious, but on this occasion it was to be justified.

Pocock left early in June, without waiting for the North Americans. Havana had been daily expecting him, and as soon as his ships were sighted the majority of old and sick persons, women, children and nuns were hurried out of the city. Males of fighting age armed themselves to assist the garrison. Impressive as the Morro was, Havana cannot be said to have been as well fortified as Cartagena. Only the harbor mouth was effectually guarded. The Cabañas heights on the east shore of the bay lacked the huge auxiliary fortress built there afterward. The city walls were inferior to those of the proud Queen of the Spanish Main.

Landing in open country on both sides of Havana, Lord Albemarle clenched a pincers-grip about the Cuban capital, and on the second day was in possession of outlying suburbs. He thereupon besieged the place closely, with incessant bombardment and local attacks, a rigid cutting off of fresh food supplies. But the calamity of yellow fever appeared among the besiegers. Had they known that the preceding autumn it had been brought in its most virulent form by an East Indian ship which had touched at Mexican ports, they might have thought twice before invading Cuba. Their deaths from the malady rose to a hundred a day.

Storming the Morro without first breaching its wall was out of the question, and the heavy artillery could not find a sheltered spot from which to effect this. On July 11, however, after three and a half weeks of fighting, the Cabañas heights were carried, and guns dragged up there battered the castle and the city. Jamaica maintained a stream of re-enforcements. Colonel Israel Putnam arrived with over three thousand North American troops. Until the forty-fourth day of the siege, it appeared that the Morro was impregnable. Then a mine was exploded under one of its bastions, and the English went in with the bayonet. They lost twice as many men as the Spanish, but the great castle fell for the only time in its history. Havana itself held out for a fortnight longer, capitulating on August 13. It had endured a cataclysmic shelling. In a single day, the eleventh, six thousand projectiles had burst amidst its narrow streets.

Pocock and Albemarle proclaimed Cuba to be annexed outright. They collected \$15,000,000 prize money, of which they gave \$3,500,000 to their soldiers, and admittedly pocketed most of the rest. The peace treaty signed the following year made readjustments that astonished the world. Cuba was restored to Spain, and England acquired Florida instead. In order to salve the wounds of her ally, France voluntarily turned Louisiana over to Spain. From France, England obtained Can-

ada, but gave back to her the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

There was method in all this madness, so far as England and France were concerned. Sugar was at the bottom of it. The West India Interest in London did not want Cuba, Guadeloupe and Martinique retained, because it dreaded the price crash which would have followed the acquisition of vast new cane fields, and it was strong enough to enforce its will at the moment. The French sugar monopoly, on the other hand, had barely enough territory for its needs, and it advocated the yielding of Canada rather than two small tropical islands. The cession of Louisiana was not wholehearted; France intended to reclaim it and finally did so. England's chief blunder was the Cuba-Florida deal. As a result of the American Revolution, she lost Florida in less than twenty years, whereas she probably could have held Cuba.

The peace of 1763 wrought many ephemeral changes in the Lesser Antilles, but it seems best to consider the latter separately. The flags had been shifting stormily for years past in that arc of islets, and were to continue doing so for years to come.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### THE ISLETS CHANGE HANDS

THE first important compromise on the Lesser Antilles was reached by England and France, the real arbiters of their fate, in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, the document which among other things wound up the War of Jenkins' Ear. It was then agreed that Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Tobago should remain forever neutral, that they should be left to the Caribs and serve as reservations to which those troublesome natives could be deported from elsewhere. Forever is a short word in international polity. England and France were tired of chasing each other out of the four islands, only to have to fight the Caribs who prospered on the dissensions of their would-be lords. The Europeans simply meant to patch up a truce until such time as either one of them saw the way clear to despoil the Caribs without interference. But their cupidity soon outran their caution.

Dominica had always been of special interest to the French. Its geographical position is midway between Guadeloupe and Martinique, and naturally they did not like to admit that a hostile power might ever become a fixture there. Furthermore, Dominica is remarkably fertile, well-watered and beautiful. Twenty-nine miles long by sixteen miles broad, its mountains tower above those of all the other islets in the chain, its Morne Diablotin, a little over five thousand feet, being the culminating peak of the submerged spur of the Andes that constitutes the Lesser Antilles. Dominica is the most lovely separate unit in the Caribbean, though there are districts of equal size in Hispaniola and Jamaica which match its tropical splendor. It has been called the fairest island on earth, while some travelers regard it as the western twin of Tahiti.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had scarcely been signed when the French started to violate it by sending planters to Dominica from both Guadeloupe and Martinique. Similar attempts in the previous century had been thwarted by Carib ferocity. This time, the French applied their technique of *bonhomie* with the unenslavable warriors and induced them to tolerate the settlers. Coffee was cultivated with much success as the sole crop. This stirred the English to wrath, and in 1759 they seized Dominica as one of their first moves against France when the action of the Seven Years' War spread to the West Indies.

Charged with breaking their pledge to maintain Carib neutrality, the

English replied that the French had begun it. The argument had force where Dominica was concerned. But the English proceeded with less justification, Admiral George Rodney commanding, to occupy in 1762 St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Tobago. They also took that year the well-established French colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Grenada. Peace came a few months later, with the readjustments mentioned in the preceding chapter. The shuttling of lesser prizes resulted as follows:

England got Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent and Tobago, or one French colony and three of the "neutral" Carib islands.

France got St. Lucia, the fourth "neutral" island, but not the one upon which her pioneer work had been expended.

It was the beginning of the end for the aborigines. They were practically out of Tobago, having found it to their advantage to migrate to Trinidad, where nominal Spanish rule had shrunk to a few settlements. So Tobago was promptly cut up into about one hundred plantations, assigned to British purchasers. In Dominica, the new landlords had trouble with the Caribs, but apparently learned something from French policy. The Indians were edged back into the central mountains, where a village containing a few hundred, of whom one hundred are said to be full-blooded, can be visited today. The original clans were whittled down by the deportation of recalcitrant individuals.

St. Lucia under the French gave promise of an easy solution of the native question, along the lines followed in Dominica. But this poor island was destined to be tossed back and forth for the next fifty years, as it had been tossed before the neutrality agreement. The Caribs got in the way of the rival expeditions, were helpless against firearms more potent than those of the past, and merged in despair with runaway Negroes. Maroons, similar to those of Jamaica, were evolved at a comparatively late date in St. Lucia.

St. Vincent furnished the major Carib tragedy since the Grenada massacres of the 1650's. When the English landed in 1762, they rushed their plans for colonization, with grants to favored persons and all other arable tracts thrown on the open market. This had been workable in Tobago, where there were few Caribs. St. Vincent, however, was a stronghold of the Indians, and the latter refused allegiance to the King. They were ruthlessly crushed, troops from North America being brought in for the purpose. A reservation for the survivors was established. Strife flared up at intervals until the end of the century. The bulk of the Caribs were then deported to Ruatan, one of the Bay Islands off Honduras. Those that remained kept their racial identity until recent times.



Grenada offered no such problem. The French had planted it in coffee, cocoa and cotton, as well as sugar cane, and it was the most immediately profitable of the four islands acquired by England after the Seven Years' War. Nevertheless, as Ragatz points out, "absentee Caribbean proprietors in Great Britain evinced marked hostility toward any development of the ceded islands despite their small size. The conditions of sale made it impossible for them [the sugar millionaires] to establish large estates there, and at the same time served to drain lesser whites away from the old colonies in the hope of becoming independent small-scale producers in the new ones." Conflicting economic interests hampered the islets, and war again and again played freakish tricks with them.

Thus, when England in the next decade was blundering through the American Revolution, France made a clean sweep of the British-held islands in the Caribbean proper, except Jamaica, Antigua and Barbados, and Spain conquered the Bahamas and Florida. This decision was reversed in a single naval battle in 1782, all her insular possessions being recaptured by England, and France ejected from hers, save Saint Domingue. The next treaty of peace restored the *status quo* in the Lesser Antilles. Then the Napoleonic Wars let loose fresh havoc, and there were infinite changes until the year of Waterloo when the present Caribbean relationship of England, France and Holland was established. The larger aspects of these events will be treated in the appropriate place.

Meanwhile, Sweden had played a small and well-nigh forgotten part in the history of the sea. By means of negotiation, she obtained from France, in 1784, minute St. Bartholomew, a dependency of Guadeloupe, which she held for ninety-three years before turning it back. The name of its chief town, Gustavia, is a memorial of this occupancy. Also, in 1810, France gave Guadeloupe itself to Sweden with the idea of saving it from England, an unnecessary subterfuge, since in the general liquidation of four years afterward, the Powers decided to let France have Guadeloupe. The Scandinavian dummy titleholder then bowed herself out.

The Danes proved peaceful neighbors throughout the Eighteenth Century. They had bought St. Croix from the Knights of Malta in 1733, and their tiny estate of three islets was run partly on sugar and partly on the revenue of the free port of Charlotte Amalia, St. Thomas, where English was the prevailing language.

The Dutch were not so fortunate. They had six island holdings: Curaçao, Oruba and Buen Ayre, off the Venezuelan coast; St. Eustatius,

Saba and part of St. Martin, off the Virgins. Free ports were maintained at Curaçao and St. Eustatius. But notwithstanding their anxiety for peace during most of the century, the Dutch were often involved in the quarrels of Europe, with unpleasant results for them the world over. England and France seized their West Indian property indiscriminately, but returned it up to the Napoleonic period when, in 1814, England annexed the Guiana provinces of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, leaving them Surinam.

Spain held Trinidad without a break until 1797. She neglected it grossly, and in the 1780's even made an exception to her traditional policy by inviting foreigners of any nationality to settle there. England improved on that by taking it over. But a few small islands remained in Spanish hands. Most historians ignore these, and the majority of guide-books do not include them in the Antilles. A study of the map will show that they are as definitely a part of the West Indian archipelago as any other unit mentioned in this chapter. At least one of them—Margarita—is important, and all are interesting. They are worth listing.

Between Trinidad and Holland's Curaçao group lie the "pearl islands" of the earliest explorers, consisting of Margarita, Cubagua, Coche, Testigos, Blanquilla, Tortuga (not to be confused with the Tortuga off Hispaniola), Aves, Orchilla, Cayo Grande and Los Roques. They now belong to Venezuela. In the western Caribbean are Vieja Providencia (Old Providence, this name having been adopted in place of Santa Catalina), San Andrés and the Corn Islands. The first two form part of the Republic of Colombia, and the third of Nicaragua.

The excitement over Vieja Providencia in the Seventeenth Century has been related. By the Eighteenth it had ceased for good to make history. Aves, a mere dot, was a noted resort of pirates. The other Spanish islets, excluding Margarita, have never been significant in the story of the Caribbean, or valuable for planting. The precise contrary is true of Margarita. It has as large an area as Martinique, its pearl fisheries have been worked for four hundred years, its soil is fertile. If any of the northern nations had had the inspiration to seize it, Margarita undoubtedly would have become another bone of contention among them. If writers on the Caribbean had cared much about the romantic annals of Spanish America, as distinct from those of the Conquest and the wars waged against Spain by other Europeans, they would have discovered that Margarita's role in the revolutionary era was colorful.

The only islets of the many referred to in this chapter which had an

eighteenth-century social life with some pretensions to culture were Barbados and Martinique.

The former prided itself on its English manners, the result of an undisputed colonial existence since 1625. Christopher Codrington, a former Governor, willed his estate in 1710 for the establishment of the first English college in the West Indies. The teachers and scholars were to be of the religious minded, "under the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; who shall be obliged to study and practise Physic and Chirurgery, as well as Divinity; that by the apparent usefulness of the former to all mankind, they may both endear themselves to the people and have the better opportunities of doing good to men's souls, whilst they are taking care of their bodies." It is not on record that the hard-living planter class experienced the uplift for which Codrington hoped. Yet the college supplied a certain intellectual tone. It still functions.

In Martinique, the colonists strove to re-create something of the vivacity and smart dressing of an aristocratic French countryside. They produced a few wits and talents who impressed themselves upon the outside world. Françoise d'Aubigné, afterward celebrated as Madame de Maintenon, mistress and last wife of Louis XIV, spent several years of her girlhood on the island. At Trois Îlets, across the bay from Fort de France, Josephine de la Pagerie was born on June 23, 1763. She married Napoleon and was crowned Empress.

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### REVOLUTION AGAINST ENGLAND

[THE year 1776, when the North American colonists declared their independence of England, was epochal for the Caribbean region. Until then, there had been universal acceptance of the idea that the overlordship of the European founders would be permanent. The flags might go on shifting—*their* flags—that was all. But from the moment the action taken in Philadelphia became known, the countries about the inland sea stirred with a new conception of their future. The effects were felt most powerfully in Louisiana, Jamaica and the Spanish colonies. No immediate revolts occurred. It required further great events, namely the accomplished freedom of the United States and the French Revolution, to crystallize nationalist sentiment where the people were ripe for liberty. In some quarters, there was a strengthening of old bonds. That the seed of republicanism was scattered in 1776, however, is not open to argument.]

Discontent in the North had been brewing for a long time. This became of vital importance to the West Indies when the first Continental Congress decided to close the ports of the thirteen colonies to British Caribbean produce from December 1, 1774, and to halt the exportation of goods to the islands after September 10, 1775. It served a policy of retaliation and non-intercourse with England, by means of which the Congress hoped to compel the adjustment of grievances. In the Caribbean, it would cause a sudden shortage of foodstuffs, such as dried fish, flour and corn, then exclusively obtained from the North, and close a valued market for sugar and rum.

The earliest official reaction was that of Jamaica. It has been well summarized by Ragatz, as follows:

“The Jamaican Assembly took the remarkable step of championing colonial rights in general and of approaching the Crown as suitor in behalf of the North Americans. A petition voted at the close of its session in December, 1774, professed profound loyalty to the King and denied the slightest intention of offering resistance to the British Government, but held it to be an estab-

lished principle of the Constitution that no part of His Majesty's subjects could legislate for any other part and that no law could bind Englishmen unless it had received the assent of their representatives. Parliament's claim of the right to legislate for the colonies was denied. The Assembly lamented the exercise of such power in the past and, while accepting laws regulating the external commerce of the island, demanded that none injurious to its constituents' interests be enacted and forced upon them in the future. It furthermore stoutly declared that depriving colonials of equal rights with Englishmen at home dissolved their dependence upon the parent State and appealed to the sovereign to mediate between his British and American subjects."

This memorial scandalized the war party in London, which refused to consider it, though merchants with immense interests in the New World filed petitions which declared they would be ruined unless harmony were restored. Both Houses took unfriendly action, hostilities began, and the Declaration of Independence was signed. Meanwhile, both the Continental Congress and the House of Representatives of Connecticut had formally thanked the Jamaicans for their efforts in behalf of peace.

Other West Indian colonies showed lack of sympathy with England's cause in the war. But Jamaica continued to be the most positive on the subject. She objected to the raising and quartering of troops, refused to provide additional barracks and made the greatest difficulties about voting money for any military purpose. Barbados declined to care for North American prisoners brought there, and the Governor was obliged to pay their living expenses out of his own pocket. "The isolation of the sugar colonies, and the overwhelming proportion of the slave population," writes Gardner, "alone prevented more tangible co-operation with the struggling colonies of the American States."

Imported provisions became scarce and dear, as had been foreseen. Merchant vessels carrying sugar and other staples to Europe were captured in large numbers by privateers, which the French allowed the revolutionists to equip in Guadeloupe and Martinique. The British islands faced ruin in a distasteful quarrel. Yet when France signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the thirteen colonies and entered the war on their side in 1778, those same islands veered to a state of panic concerning their political future. The danger that they might be seized by the French was obvious, and only the recent acquisitions desired that. Then Spain joined in the attack on England, as the ally of France, but not of the thirteen colonies. Jamaica and the rest, their

peril increased, were forced by circumstances into a pro-English attitude.

Admiralty in the Caribbean had lain for some while between the navies of England and France. On paper, there was little excuse for assigning superiority to either of them, for the warships of both were numerous and powerful, and as yet they had fought no battle of the first order in those waters. The British, however, had the advantage of better leadership, as was soon to be demonstrated. The broadening of the conflict found two of their greatest naval geniuses on the scene, the one a veteran, the other just beginning his career. They were Admiral George Brydges Rodney, appointed to the command of the Leeward Islands station, and Horatio Nelson, who at the age of twenty-one was in charge of the fort at Port Royal, Jamaica. The presence of Nelson is of no more than romantic interest. He led a detachment that ascended the San Juan River, Nicaragua, and was prevented by a fever epidemic from capturing the cities of Granada and León, in 1780. Stricken himself, he was convalescent for months, his bid for glory postponed.

But Rodney emerged as the savior of his country's fortunes in the West Indies, the victor of one of the sea fights that changed history, and the hero that England badly needed to offset her disasters on the continent. His experience on the same station during the Seven Years' War proved invaluable now, for he had been the great snatcher of islands from the French. By the time he returned, in 1780, Dominica, St. Vincent and Grenada had fallen to the enemy, and although he at once possessed himself of St. Lucia, which he regarded as the indispensable advance base for Barbados, his headquarters, he was forced to witness the rapid loss of other small English holdings, from St. Kitts in the north to Tobago in the south. He properly regarded the harassing of French and Spanish fleets as being, for the moment, his most important duty.

Early in 1780, Rodney trailed a strong convoy of merchantmen guarded by warships, under the command of Admiral de Guichen, which had left Martinique for Saint Domingue. He engaged them indecisively for three days, and forced them to take refuge at Guadeloupe. A month later, the French were out again, were severely punished in a series of attacks on their rear and thought themselves lucky to get back to Martinique. Rodney set a watch over them, then made a lightning voyage to Sandy Hook, off New York, where he hoped to catch the French Admiral de Ternay. He accomplished little by this foray, except the overhauling of a number of privateers, and by December he was back in the Caribbean. A profitable mission awaited him.

England had become enraged at the friendly attitude of Holland toward the North American colonies, citing the free port of St. Eustatius as a "nest of vultures" where the revolutionists were supplied with munitions and manufactured goods, and objecting, in the words of Lord North, that the Netherlands Government had "suffered Paul Jones, a Scotchman and a pirate," to sell prizes and to refit under the protection of their flag. An answer to the protest had been scarcely awaited. War had been declared on Holland, and Rodney received instructions to attack without delay the colonies and shipping of the new foe. St. Eustatius was mentioned angrily. This speck of territory, a market on a tropical beach, where incidentally the flag of the young American republic had received its first salute, may be considered the chief cause of hostilities. Its warehouses were gorged with the merchandise of all nations. The chance to liquidate such a place was reminiscent of the time of the buccaneers.

With two squadrons and a large body of troops, Rodney arrived at St. Eustatius on February 3, 1781. He thoroughly blockaded the depot island, which was without defenses, then demanded its instant surrender, with its dependencies and "everything in and belonging thereto." The Dutch Governor complied by return messenger. The equally unconditional surrender of the islets of Saba and St. Martin was guaranteed.

"The value of this capture was enormous," writes Hart. "Upwards of 150 ships of all classes were taken, including one man-of-war of thirty-eight guns and 300 men, and five of from fourteen to twenty-six guns each, all equipped and ready for immediate service." A Dutch convoy of some thirty heavily-laden merchantmen which had left St. Eustatius a day or two before its surrender were overtaken at sea and brought back. Several additional ships with naval stores from Europe were snared as they approached the port. Rodney underestimated the value of the whole property seized when he stated that it was "between two and three millions sterling." Actually, it exceeded £3,000,000. Included in the haul were consignments from English traders, West Indians as well as Europeans, which had been entered under free port regulations in the hope of vast profits.

Rodney made no distinction as to ownership. He sent some of the stores to British colonies where they were needed, and he sold the rest at auction. St. Eustatius was turned into a gigantic bargain counter, at which agents representing French and American buyers are known to have bought heavily. "So great was the quantity of commodities offered," asserts Ragatz, "that there was little competition between bid-

ders and lots on the average sold at one-fourth of their value. Supplies became more plentiful throughout all the British colonies than they had been at any time since the outbreak of the war."

Those among the original owners who were British and could offer documentary evidence protested vehemently. Their lawsuits plagued Rodney for the rest of his life. He countered with the charge that the merchants, many of whom hailed from near-by St. Kitts, had engaged in supplying the enemy. The uncompromising manner in which he eradicated the free port, it must be said, hit the American consumer harder than anyone else. The privateers suffered, too. For a month the Admiral kept the Dutch flag flying, and he boasted that thereby he lured a hostile vessel a day under his guns. This may not have been sportsmanlike, but it was war.

Both on the continent and in the islands, however, the military victories of England's opponents more than balanced what Rodney had done. George Washington and his lieutenants had triumphed over superior forces. The Battle of Saratoga had been won in 1777. Before the year 1781 ended, Cornwallis was to surrender at Yorktown and control of the situation pass definitely to the revolutionary army.

As early as 1776, Commodore Hopkins of the American Navy had seized Nassau, capital of the Bahamas, and carried away the Governor a prisoner. It was merely a raid, the islands remaining in the hands of the English. But in the spring of 1781 there arrived at New Orleans a small Spanish expedition, under orders to aid Don Bernardo de Gálvez, Governor of Louisiana, to drive the English from Florida and the Bahamas. An officer of Venezuelan birth, Francisco de Miranda, accompanied it with the rank of captain and so distinguished himself that he was promoted to a colonelcy. The inner meaning of his errand was not lost on him. He decided during this campaign to work for the independence of Spanish America, a cause in which his was to be a glorious name.

Louisiana had been restive under Spanish rule. The province at first had declined to accept the arbitrary transfer of sovereignty in 1763, had driven one Spanish Governor from New Orleans, and had been practically self-governing for six years. The arrival of a strong administrator, Alexander O'Reilly, Irish soldier of fortune and general in the service of Spain, had altered all that. He condemned six of the patriots to death and publicly burned their proclamation of liberty. Theirs had been the first tentative plan for the founding of a republic in North America.

The launching of revolution by the English colonists in 1776 had



naturally roused the half-quenched embers in Louisiana. But no obstacles had been placed in the way of the traffic in munitions on the Mississippi River which at once sprang up. Governor Gálvez was anti-British, and when the chance came actually to march against the soldiers of the oppressors of the North, sentiment veered to his support overnight. There were many French colonial volunteers in the army which Gálvez led to the conquest of Florida in 1781.

Mobile had been assigned to the English by the treaty of 1763. It was now captured easily, and the expeditionary force swept on to Pensacola. The old fort there had been rebuilt, but although it put up a good defense it was worn down. All the other strong places in the upper part of the peninsula, including St. Augustine, capitulated in rapid succession. The southern part was still undeveloped, a waste of sand, pine scrub and swamps. England, to be sure, had had little time in which to organize Florida as a colony, and subsequent to the Revolution most of the regular troops had been drafted for service in the Carolinas. Nor did she ever have the support of the resident population.

The next move of Gálvez was to take a flying squadron to the Bahamas, which he overran. This advance could not be maintained. A force sent down from Charleston, South Carolina, recovered Nassau and slowly cleared the group of invaders. Florida rested in the hands of the vigorous Governor of Louisiana, who shortly afterward was promoted to be Viceroy of Mexico. In Honduras, Central America, the English were chased from their lumber camps about Belize.

Admiral Rodney, meanwhile, learned with anxiety that a new French fleet consisting of twenty ships-of-the-line, commanded by the Comte de Grasse, had sailed from Brest for the Caribbean. His efforts to intercept him do not seem to have been well planned. De Grasse appeared suddenly in April, struck without result at St. Lucia, but passed on to a successful assault on Tobago, then sailed for the Virginia capes, to co-operate with Washington in the campaign to destroy Cornwallis.

At this juncture, Rodney's health failed. He placed Admiral Samuel Hood in temporary charge of the West Indies fleet and hurried to England. During his absence Hood was unable to prevent the French from seizing a few more odds and ends, including the now useless St. Eustatius. De Grasse returned from the victorious operations in the north and, with his base at Martinique, commenced to mass the most powerful naval armament that his country had ever thrown into a Caribbean venture. The rumor flew, later to be amply confirmed, that the object was to conquer Jamaica and drive the English from the

American Tropics. Far from being an impracticable dream, it could be accomplished if one smashing defeat were administered to the British at sea. Hood realized it, and Rodney when he got back to Barbados on February 19, 1782, saw it with still greater clarity.

The drama became a tense maneuvering for advantage on the part of Rodney and De Grasse. The former desired to compel a battle in the Lesser Antilles, the latter to evade one until he had joined a Spanish fleet off the north coast of Hispaniola. Rodney collected thirty-six ships-of-the-line at Gros Ilet Bay, St. Lucia. De Grasse lay at Fort Royal (now Fort de France), Martinique, with thirty-five ships-of-the-line.

The two bases were only about thirty miles apart. Rodney, the more enterprising commander, kept watch on the movements of De Grasse by means of a chain of frigates within signaling distance of one another, which he strung out from the northern tip of St. Lucia to a point within sight of Martinique. He learned that the French had a large convoy of transports with over five thousand soldiers on board, as well as cargo ships with stores of ammunition and foodstuffs. By April 1, it was plain that the armada would leave at the first opportunity. In those days, opportunity meant a favoring wind. This occurred on the morning of April 8, when word was relayed that De Grasse was out. The entire English fleet at once started in pursuit, Hood's squadron leading. Contact with the French rear was established late that night, and the following morning a few of Hood's ships were engaged off Dominica.

Finding himself hampered by his convoy, De Grasse ordered it to Guadeloupe, then steered into the channel between that island and Dominica. The ensuing battle was fought near the group of rocky cays called Les Saintes and has taken its name from them. Neither fleet was satisfied with its position until the twelfth. On the morning of that day, the *Ville de Paris*, a splendid three-decker of 2,300 tons and 110 guns, flagship of De Grasse, collided with the *Zélé*, another great ship-of-the-line, damaging her so badly that a frigate had to take her in tow and leave for the nearest port. Rodney signaled Hood to pursue the *Zélé*, and De Grasse swung about to protect her. This brought on the action.

Sailing in opposite directions, the two fleets passed each other at close quarters. The accepted technique would have been for the side that wanted a battle, in this case the English, to force matters by blazing away with every available gun. An artillery duel would have followed. But Rodney had decided on something new, which gave him his

reputation among the world's admirals and which found many imitators. Seizing a moment when the wind shifted, he drove with his flagship, the *Formidable*, and several others at the middle of the French line, breaking through and dislocating the enemy into a number of groups. Then only did he order a general cannonading of the scattered units.

He personally led the *Formidable* against the *Ville de Paris*, sinking on his way the *Diadème* with a single broadside. But one of his own men-of-war got ahead of him, and after a bitter fight which lasted until nightfall, compelled the French flagship to strike. Admiral de Grasse was taken prisoner and escorted into Rodney's presence. The latter, sixty-three years old and suffering from gout throughout the day, spoke of this as the supreme event of his career. He was perhaps too delighted. Hood charged later that in rejoicing over the capture of the *Ville de Paris* he lost the chance of taking "a dozen better ships in lieu of her."

The victory was not a sweeping one. Seven major French craft were destroyed or captured. The rest escaped, nineteen attaining Cap François, Saint Domingue, and the others fleeing in the opposite direction to Curaçao. But all Europe admitted that the Battle of the Saintes was decisive, so far as sea power in the Caribbean was concerned. France did not try to assemble another fleet there and never again planned to take Jamaica. Rodney was made a peer of the realm. Jamaica honored him with a statue at St. Jago de la Vega, now Spanish Town.

The peace which followed in 1783 left England vanquished on the North American continent. The thirteen colonies obtained their independence, and Florida was restored to Spain. Against the Latin allies, however, England was the winner south of the present United States, which she would not have been if De Grasse had beaten Rodney. She regained every island she had lost, with the exception of Tobago, transferred for the time being to France. The privileges of her logwood cutters in Central America were conceded for a term of years, and as a result of this she soon got tacit recognition for the colony of British Honduras. She abandoned her empty claim to the Mosquito Coast.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### REVOLUTION AGAINST FRANCE

{REVOLUTION in France's colonies in the Caribbean occurred less than ten years after the treaty which liberated the United States. By no means did the one event derive from the other. English rule had been repudiated in North America by white men, ranging from New England farmers, merchants and seafarers to the great landowners of Virginia and the Carolinas. As a result of grievances which they held to be just, they had evoked the God of Battles against the land of their origin. France had aided them partly for reasons of international policy, and partly because their struggle had moved deeply certain liberal-minded Frenchmen, such as Lafayette. But the planters of Saint Domingue and Martinique did not feel that their case was comparable with that of the North Americans. They were well satisfied with their home government, which fostered their prosperity, and which prior to the fall of Louis XVI was exactly the sort of aristocratic regime that a privileged planter class desired.}

The yield of Saint Domingue alone, in sugar, rum, coffee, cotton and indigo approximately equaled in the 1780's that of all the British Caribbean possessions combined. Size and intensive production considered, it was rated as the leading tropical colony on earth. The 40,000 or so whites who lived luxuriously there on the labor of 480,000 slaves dreaded having to control so large a majority of Negroes without the backing of warships and soldiers from Europe. Even after the French Revolution had shattered their world, they clung locally to the old order, shrinking from the idea of founding a nation. The fact that they took it upon themselves to write a constitution and elect a parliament has been misunderstood. They did not sever the ties with France. They were hoping for the restoration of the Bourbons.

{But the fall of the Bastille and the cry, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" were too dynamic to leave the masses in any French country unaffected. There were about 25,000 free persons of mixed blood in Saint Domingue, and these took the initiative of asking the National Assembly to grant them full political rights. They sent a representative named Vincent Ogé to Paris. He returned in 1790 with voting concessions which infuriated the planters. A small body of mulattoes armed

themselves, were easily crushed in an engagement and their leaders, Ogé and Chavannes, sentenced to death. These two men were broken on the rack and wheel in a public square in Cap François

After that, a general servile rebellion became inevitable. It was fairly slow in developing, its progress marked by strange paradoxes and its every step influenced by some event in France. The mother country was now the womb of revolution, whence the leaders of all vassal peoples drew spiritual life. Black slaves were moved very differently from the haughty creole patriots of Spanish America. But both responded.)

The National Assembly in France condemned the execution of Ogé and Chavannes as an atrocity. It sent out a new Governor and two regiments of soldiers to suppress what it called the insurrection of the whites. It proclaimed that free colored men were entitled not only to the vote, but to seats in the Provincial Assembly. This turned the planters' faction into a royalist party in name as well as deed. A state of civil war prevailed, with Paris theoretically on the side of emancipation. The fresh regiments went over to the whites. The Governor was driven from Port-au-Prince, the capital; he entrenched himself for the Republic at Cap François.

Early in 1791, revolt began to simmer on the plantations of the northern plain. The leader was Boukman, a coal-black *papaloi*, or priest, of the voodoo cult. The superstitious barbarism underlying this phase of the revolution is not to be denied by even its warmest apologists. The plan was to exterminate the masters, man, woman and child, take over the country and establish the worship of the snake. Nationalism scarcely entered into it until the enlistment later of Toussaint l'Ouverture, Jean Jacques Dessalines, Henry Christophe, Alexandre Pétion and other strong personalities. The fermentation was deep and dark.

Boukman whipped up his followers at nocturnal meetings in the woods. Ready for action by the end of July, he counted on a simultaneous rising of the slaves in Cap François, six thousand of whom were males. The plot largely miscarried. A premature insurrection at one of the estates was crushed bloodily. Hasty defense measures saved the town. But when Boukman gave the signal on the night of August 22, after ceremonies at which the blood of a sacrificed pig was drunk—a night of tropical tempest, with thunderclaps and rain—it caught the whites unprepared in any real sense. Massacre and the torch possessed the countryside for eight days without interruption. Boukman pressed to the outskirts of Cap François, where he was killed in battle and his

head stuck up on a pole within the city. Dozens of his captured men were broken on the wheel during the next week. Jean-François succeeded to the leadership.

The rebels held control on the plain, where they continued to devastate property, exhibiting a special venom against sugar mills and machinery of any kind. They smashed tools. They burned the growing crops. In their frenzy they did not stop to think that they were destroying the resources of the land they hoped to make theirs, were ensuring famine for the near future. It would be unphilosophical to denounce illiterate slaves for behaving in this wanton manner. They attacked the symbols of their bondage. At the end of a month or so, their mania began to subside and they gathered in camps to reorganize.

This was the juncture at which Toussaint l'Ouverture joined the revolution and swiftly imposed his superior intelligence and powers of leadership upon the dead Boukman's following. He was about forty-five years old, an ugly little man with truly noble moral qualities and the most statesmanlike brain that has as yet been produced by the Negro race in America. He had been well treated on the Bréda plantation, where he was born and raised, had been encouraged to educate himself and to read whatever books were available. In return, he had protected the owner's wife, Mme. Bayou de Libertas, and her family during the early weeks of the insurrection, and before he took the field he sent her to Cap François under the escort of his brother Paul. Toussaint has been described as a coachman. He doubtless drove at times, but his main post had been that of steward of the livestock, which involved much responsibility. Because of his knowledge of herbs, he was called "The Physician." The band of rebels he joined made him its doctor. He was soon its chief.

His original surname was Bréda, for which he substituted L'Ouverture after he had won fame as a general. Legend has it that one of the high French officials in Saint Domingue exclaimed on learning that he had won new victories, "This man makes an opening everywhere!" and that a sobriquet resulted. It has also been said that Toussaint breached the foe's defenses at a critical moment, which caused him to be known as "L'Homme de l'Ouverture." An excellent modern authority thinks it more probable that fellow slaves applied the nickname on account of a gap in his teeth. He made it official for reasons he never explained.

After Toussaint had brought discipline to the wild bands that had terrorized the north, he and Jean-François thought it politic to seek a reconciliation with the whites. This proved impossible, because of the temper of the Provincial Assembly, which was dominated by planters

hostile to the principles of the French Revolution and unwilling to deal with former bondsmen.

There was no longer a stable government in Saint Domingue. The writ of the National Assembly ran there but feebly, the Governor from Paris enjoying the support only of a small element of middle-class whites, mostly artisans, and of fewer colored persons than one might imagine. Indeed, the utmost confusion regarding loyalties soon prevailed. Mulattoes in the southwest, furious at not having been granted full civil rights, launched a new revolt aimed at French authority, republican or no. Other mulattoes, themselves slave-owners, threw in their lot with the royalists, on the theory that the upper class must eventually prevail. The Negroes saw the struggle in the terms of justice for their race, but could not tell in what quarter they might expect to be heard. They scattered their forces. They shed their blood in behalf of all the factions. Toussaint alone among the early leaders kept his head, drilled a small army until it was capable of fighting European soldiers, and bided his time.

In January, 1793, Louis XVI went to the guillotine, and shortly afterward France found herself at war with England and Spain. The new parliament, the National Convention, had not seen fit to abolish slavery in the colonies. The arch-commissioner, Sonthonax, whom Paris had sent to Saint Domingue, had not clarified the issues or proved capable even of asserting political authority. This set of circumstances decided Toussaint. He crossed over into Spanish Hispaniola, with his picked troops and several lesser commands, and offered his services for the conquest of Saint Domingue. He was commissioned a Spanish general. Marching back at the head of an army of mixed troops, he demonstrated military capacity of the first order. In less than a year he had occupied the eastern and northern provinces of the French colony, with the exception of Cap François and Mole St. Nicholas. Among the new talents developed under him was the able but sinister Dessalines. Henry Christophe, a native of British St. Kitts, left his job as waiter in a hotel and joined Toussaint's army, receiving the rank of sergeant.

But the white planters also had acted desperately in that fateful year of 1793. They had asked England to intervene, on the obvious assumption that that country would annex the colony. Prime Minister Pitt thought well of the idea. He had already received a report from a confidential agent, which described "the deplorable situation of the French West Indies," and emphasized "the vast, vast importance" of Saint Domingue to Great Britain, since possession of it "would give such aid and force to industry as would be most happily felt in every

part of the Empire." The Governor of Jamaica was now instructed to send an expedition, and on September 9, 1793, nine hundred men landed at Jérémie in the south. They were enthusiastically received by property-owners, mulattoes as well as whites. Port-au-Prince and all other strongholds, except Aux Cayes, fell to them. A British warship obtained the surrender of Mole St. Nicholas, at the tip of the northern peninsula, where the garrison, mostly Irish legionaries, had become disillusioned with the cause of republican France.

Saint Domingue, in the spring of 1794, was virtually divided between the English and Toussaint's forces representing Spain, with the Frenchman, Laveaux, holding Cap François. The revolution, as an effective movement to gain independence for the country, was still years distant. General Laveaux then took an adroit step. He negotiated secretly with Toussaint, obtained his defection from the Spanish side and appointed him a general in the French Army. The latter committed this treachery, if treachery it was, because he believed that it ensured emancipation for the blacks, a reform which had at last been voted by the National Convention in Paris. He probably never envisaged the setting up of a republic.

Moving swiftly against his former allies, Toussaint routed them in a series of brilliant engagements and threw them across the border. He tackled the English with equal resolution, his success at first being confined to checking their progress. The following year, peace was signed between France and Spain, and as one of its terms Spain ceded her half of Hispaniola. Also in 1795, Laveaux was appointed Governor-General. He promptly made Toussaint his chief aide with the title of Lieutenant-Governor.

There was no stopping the Negro chieftain after that. He fought the English tenaciously, beating them time and again. He engineered the election of both Laveaux and Sonthonax to represent Saint Domingue in France, and on their departure became commander-in-chief. In 1798, he expelled the English from their last footholds. The cession of Spanish Hispaniola became a reality, because he swept over the territory and established himself as ruler of the whole island. With the potent aid of Dessalines, he crushed the mulatto opposition and forced its heads, Rigaud and Pétion, to take refuge in France. No one denied that his administration was remarkably sagacious. He partly restored the agricultural system, and even invited many of the whites to return, giving them back their plantations and furnishing them with laborers on a crop-sharing basis.

In the autumn of 1801, he proclaimed a constitution, under which he confirmed his own title as Governor-General for life with the power to



name his successor. He had turned all Hispaniola into a mere French protectorate. Whether any regime in Paris would have been willing to leave him undisturbed for long is an open question. But Napoleon, then First Consul and freed of European complications by the Peace of Amiens, decided to regain control immediately.

It is necessary to pause and list events in France's minor Caribbean colonies. The great Revolution had been followed by slave risings in Martinique and Guadeloupe, but these had been put down. When the English acted against Saint Domingue in 1793, they also seized Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia. The first-named was held continuously by that nation and used as the headquarters of its West Indian fleet until the end of hostilities. In 1795, however, there occurred a singular diversion which has been neglected by the historians. The English call it the Brigands' War. A French squadron of seven ships ran through the British naval cordon and landed 1,500 soldiers in Guadeloupe, under the command of Victor Hugues. He was a mulatto, a salient personality in republican France, who had been detached from his post of public prosecutor at Rochefort to lead this expedition.

Victor Hugues enflamed Guadeloupe, raised Negro levies and drove the English to the cover of a few forts. He passed on to St. Lucia, which he captured; to St. Vincent and Grenada, where he incited Caribs and slaves alike to massacre the planters. The English Governor of Grenada, Ninian Home, was butchered with forty-seven others in a single coup. Hugues' raid on the Lesser Antilles, for that was all it was, collapsed shortly and the English took charge once more. With peace, they had relinquished the small French islands, and Napoleon had only Saint Domingue to worry about in the Caribbean.

He sent out twenty thousand veteran troops under the command of his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, husband of Pauline Bonaparte, with secret orders to temporize at the start, but finally to extirpate the regime of Toussaint l'Ouverture. Leclerc's lieutenants were Generals Kerverseau, Boudet and Donatien Rochambeau, the last being a son of the Rochambeau who had commanded French forces in the American Revolution. The mulatto leaders, Pétion and Rigaud, were minor officers. The fair, frail Pauline accompanied the expedition.

Striking simultaneously at Cap François, Port-au-Prince, Fort Dauphin and Santo Domingo City, the French swept everything before them. Only Leclerc himself, at Cap François, met real opposition. Christophe, a rising star, burned the city and allowed the white inhabitants to be put to the sword before retreating. Desperate fighting ensued in the interior, but by the end of April, 1802, every Negro army had surrendered. Christophe, Dessalines and other leaders had accepted

military rank under the French. Toussaint retired to his estate at Ennery.

It looked like a complete and lasting triumph. Such it might well have been if yellow fever, the old nemesis of European soldiers in the Caribbean, had not stricken the French with a virulence seldom equaled. Men died by the thousands. This was the moment which Leclerc injudiciously chose for trapping Toussaint by means of a despicable ruse. When he responded to a warmly worded invitation to confer with General Brunet at Gonaives on important matters "which it is impossible to explain by letter," Toussaint was seized, deported to France and imprisoned in a fortress until his death in April, 1803.

This act, along with Napoleon's subsequent declaration that slavery would be restored, and the ever-waxing epidemic, proved ruinous to the French. Pétion, the mulatto, son of a white father, remarked to Dessalines, the black: "How could General Toussaint have counted on the sincerity of the whites, he their former slave, when I have not even the friendship of my father for the single reason that I have African blood in my veins?" These two agreed to turn on Leclerc at the first good opportunity, and the other colored generals were soon of their mind. They all took the field in October, 1802.

Thirteen months later, the last French soldier had been driven from the island. Leclerc had died of fever, and his successor, Rochambeau, surrendered to an English fleet off Cap François. The impending calamity had decided Napoleon to sell Louisiana to the United States, a transaction consummated in April, 1803. The connection between the two events is usually overlooked. Napoleon took Louisiana back from Spain in 1800 as part of a vast plan for Caribbean expansion; he was willing to dispose of it for 60,000,000 francs because Yellow Jack had disgusted him with tropical America.

[The independence of Saint Domingue was proclaimed on November 29, 1803, and the Arawák name of Haiti adopted the following New Year's Day.] Dessalines became Governor-General for life, assuming that title because it had for so long signified supreme authority to his people. But he changed it for that of Emperor, shortly after he had personally supervised a mass slaughter of most of the French men, women and children left in the country. His megalomania overleaped all bounds. He said of the massacre, "I enjoy my own approbation; for me that is sufficient."

Upon the assassination of Dessalines in 1806, Haiti was split apart, Alexandre Pétion becoming President in the south and Henry Christophe King in the north. This lasted until the suicide of Christophe in 1820, when the state was reunited as a republic under Jean Pierre Boyer.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### REVOLUTION AGAINST SPAIN

[THE revolutionary spirit had manifested itself in Spanish America earlier than in the French colonies, but the far-flung movement that resulted came more gradually to a head. There were many reasons for this. The element of a servile revolt played no important part, anywhere under the Spanish flag. Nationalism was the issue, a sentiment which readily drew lessons from the victorious struggle of the North Americans with England. George Washington excited passionate admiration among the Spanish creoles, whereas the whites of Saint Domingue had been cool to the things for which he stood and the black slaves of that sorrowful land had scarcely heard his name. Yet the response was limited at first in the Iberian viceroyalties, because these had no structure of local self-government upon which to build. They needed the additional inspiration of the French Revolution to arouse them fully, the shadow of Napoleon over them to unloose the thunderbolts.]

There followed a series of wars, which as Chapman correctly states were "primarily social," and which lasted far into the Nineteenth Century. These were "a creole movement against the Spaniards, not a rising of the masses, and not truly democratic." Republics came into being with terrible birth pangs, children of chaos produced inevitably by the infamies of the colonial system, their patterns of liberty yet to be evolved.]

Enough has been said about the laws which throttled trade and intercourse to show that they could have caused revolutions, even if there had been no other provocation. In 1774 restraints on the intercolonial commerce of the northern viceroyalties from Mexico to Peru were withdrawn, and four years later direct trade was authorized between practically all Spanish ports and twenty points in the colonies. The reform came too late. There remained that other ineradicable grievance, the contemptuous attitude of the European Spaniard toward the creole.

From a mountain of evidence that could be adduced, let us note an item or two. During the Eighteenth Century, a high official of the Casa de Contratación once remarked that education and wealth were "bad

qualities in a vassal of the Indies." Then and later, it was the stock gibe of Spanish travelers that the creoles were less than human. "I do not know what kind of animals to call them, but some sort of animals they are," said one. Another wrote, "They are no better than monkeys." It has been asserted time and again that every visiting Spaniard, down to the common sailor or ditch-digger, regarded himself as superior to an American-born landowner. Yet some of the latter bore titles conferred on their ancestors.

There were many colonials of brilliant attainments, who had been educated abroad and who were received as equals there, even in Spain, but who could not be appointed to the meanest office in their native country. Rules always have their exceptions, as we know. The very few Spanish Americans who obtained preferment in Government or Church paid hard cash for it, and were forced to practice a degrading toadyism.

By the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, most creoles, and particularly those of Venezuela and Cuba, regarded themselves as citizens of their respective provinces and in no sense Spaniards. Completely at a loss as to how it could be accomplished, they knew that some day they would find a way to be free. Sporadic outbursts took place. In 1717, 1721 and 1723, Cuban planters rioted in protest against a Government monopoly of tobacco. In 1749 and 1751, blood was shed resisting the abuses of the Royal Guipúzcoa Company of Caracas, Venezuela, a Spanish concern which had been given control of the province's trade. These were but symptoms.

The first separatist revolt which occurred after the North Americans had set the example was the poignant affair of Tupac Amarú in Peru. Though remote from the Caribbean scene, it profoundly stirred the imagination of patriots there. For it was nothing less than an attempt to revive the independence of the Incas, and its leader was descended from an emperor of the same name who had been beheaded by the Spaniards in 1571. The Tupac Amarú who took up arms in 1780, a well educated man bearing the courtesy title of Marquis of Oropesa, raised an army of fifty thousand Indians and *mestizos*, with which he swept to the gates of Cuzco. He was defeated in a pitched battle, and he and his family taken prisoner. The Spaniards outdid themselves in dealing with him. Bernard Moses writes:

"He [Tupac Amarú] was condemned to witness the execution of his wife, a son, his uncle, his brother-in-law Antonio Bastides, and his captains; to have his tongue cut out; to be torn in pieces

by horses attached to his limbs and driven in different directions; to have his body burnt on the heights of Picchu, and to have his head and arms and legs stuck on poles to be set up in the different towns that had been loyal to him; to have his houses demolished, their sites strewn with salt, his goods confiscated, his relatives declared infamous, and all documents relating to his descent burnt by the hangman. . . . This sentence in all its barbarity was carried out on the 18th of May, 1781."

Yet the Inca revolt continued, off and on, for two years. La Paz (in the modern Bolivia) was twice besieged by the maddened Indians, and the contagion spreading north to Nueva Granada, two creoles named Berbeo and Galán marched with twenty thousand men on the city of Bogotá. Both insurrections were crushed; but they had lasting results. The most important was the conversion of the Indians in the Andes region to the idea that creoles were their friends and Spaniards their implacable enemies. For this reason, they later supported the wars of independence, which could hardly have been won without their aid.

In Spain, at least one statesman, the Conde de Aranda, was impressed by the happenings in both the Americas. He prepared a memorial for the King, Charles III, which is still worth reading as a prophecy and which remains almost unique among Spanish official documents for its lucid analysis of colonial realities. The royal estate, he said, was too large, too distant and too malcontent to be successfully defended if attacked by a strong power. Writing in 1783, the year the independence of the United States was recognized, Aranda calmly predicted that the Anglo-Saxon republic would soon be formidable in world politics, that it would wish to extend its territories and that it assuredly would begin by annexing Florida. It might then be expected to grasp for other conquests. Once that sort of thing was under way, there was no telling what might transpire in the southern continent.

Aranda offered a solution, extraordinarily temperate, shrewd and adapted to the times. He proposed that Spain should divide her colonies into three kingdoms, exclusive of a few strategic points to be retained, preferably Cuba and Puerto Rico. Direct control in these kingdoms should be surrendered by the Spanish monarch, who would nevertheless assume the title of Emperor of all component parts of his original domain. Offensive and defensive alliances would bind the kingdoms to him and to one another. The new sovereigns should be carefully chosen, and by means of intermarriages of the royal families the connection could be made more and more intimate.

If this had been done, revolution in Spanish America probably would

have been postponed for many years, though not indefinitely, and Spain would have been able to offer a far stronger front to the aggression of Napoleon. But Charles III would have none of it. Lulled by a decade of quietude in the colonies, his successor, Charles IV, rejected a similar suggestion in 1793. Then, in 1797, Captain Manuel Gual and José Mariá España launched a conspiracy of creoles and *mestizos* in Venezuela, with the object of setting up a republic. They were detected. España—ironic name for an insurgent against Spain—was put to death along with several companions, but Gual escaped. When the hurricane that this portended had run its course, the senile oppressor was left with precisely what the Conde de Aranda had declared she could safely keep—Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Meanwhile, what of Francisco de Miranda, the Venezuelan who had served in the army that recaptured Florida during the American Revolution? He had been sincere when, on that campaign, he had secretly pledged his sword to his own people. Unwavering in his resolve, he was forced by circumstances to spend the best years of his life abroad, and he became a special pleader in foreign capitals for the abstract justice of his cause long before he was in a position to pass to the plane of action. His story is of singular interest in the annals of liberty. Spanish Americans call him "The Precursor," a title which fits him well.

Upon the cessation of the fighting in Florida, Miranda's regiment was transferred to Havana. He became friendly with the Captain-General of Cuba, but this did not shield him from the jealousy of army officers who resented the fact that a creole had risen to the rank of colonel. They accused him of having had treasonable relations with the English. Whether the charge had any basis of truth it is difficult to say. He was convicted at the first inquiry, but cleared on appeal to the Council of the Indies. Miranda did not wait for the second decision. He fled to the United States, where he immediately sought to arouse sympathy for the spread of republican ideals to the Caribbean.

Alexander Hamilton, himself a West Indian, born on the British island of Nevis in 1757, gave his moral support. The Union, however, had just come into existence and its political state was chaotic. No material help could be obtained from North Americans at that time. Miranda proceeded to Europe, where he developed into a figure of romance, a soldier of fortune, traveler and associate of the great. Between 1785 and 1789 he visited England, Holland, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, Russia, Italy and Turkey. He studied military technique in all these lands. Some accounts say that the glamor of Egypt's ancient

monuments drew him as far as the banks of the Nile. In Russia he was a confidant of Catherine the Great and almost certainly one of her many lovers.

Around 1790, he concentrated on England as the country most likely to be persuaded to assist the Spanish colonies, with the United States as second choice, and France third. This policy was to harm him in Venezuela, for his compatriots realized more clearly than he did that if England ever sent ships and soldiers on a formal expedition, she would emerge as the new landlord of much of the "liberated" territory. There was not the same objection to aid from individual British adventurers, but as volunteers Miranda had a marked preference for Frenchmen, whom he regarded as better republicans.

Failing to make progress with the English Government, he went to France, where in the wild days of the Terror and the grand assault of European monarchies on the republic, Miranda shone as a hero from the brave New World. He joined the French Army, was given the rank of Brigadier-General and captured Antwerp in dashing style. Brissot, the Girondist, promised him help for Venezuela. Before long, Miranda learned that the friendship of a young regime in peril is fickle at best. For his innocent part in the military disaster at Neerwinden, he was arrested and kept in prison for a year and a half. He returned to England in 1798.

It would appear that the British Government thought him useful, chiefly as a bogey-man with which to threaten Spain, and that they found devious ways of giving him an allowance from secret funds. He renewed his negotiations with Alexander Hamilton, but although the latter was very encouraging nothing came of it. Miranda's London house acquired the reputation, little by little, of being the center where refugees from Spanish America met and plotted for independence. It is true that the General welcomed all such visitors, but he was not the director of an inter-colonial *junta*. His own schemes had but one immediate end, the liberation of Venezuela.

In 1805, he went back to the United States for the first time in twenty years, and if he had found his patron Hamilton among the living the outcome might have been different. The brilliant West Indian had fallen the year before in a duel with Aaron Burr, and Miranda had little support when he saw President Jefferson and the Secretary of State, Madison. They could not be convinced that it was wise for the fledgling republic to give help such as she had been glad to receive. Jefferson, anyway, was known to have designs on Florida and Cuba. He stated them bluntly a few years later.

Miranda appealed to private persons in Philadelphia and New York, to whom he had introductions, and got the concrete aid about which he had dreamed for so long. A filibustering expedition was organized, the first of many that were to leave the United States in the next hundred years to take part in Caribbean wars. An armed vessel, the *Leander*, with two hundred volunteers, mostly North Americans, sailed early in 1806 under the command of Miranda. Now, at last, he was to be the Precursor, the author of one of those coups foredoomed to failure without which it is impossible for an adolescent people to find its soul.

He did not announce the destination until the *Leander* was at sea. He then made it clear that he believed firmly that as soon as he set foot on Venezuelan soil, the populace would rise en masse. It was not to be so easy as that, but there can be no doubt that a leader of his kind must hold such a conviction if he is to be anything more than a histrionic blunderer. His gestures must spring from honest delusions.

The Spaniards had been warned to expect him. They sent out two warships, which prevented him from landing near Ocumare, chased the *Leander* in circles and almost captured her. Miranda then cruised among the British islands, where he picked up some additional recruits and supplies. Abruptly, he slipped through the blockade and seized the port of Coro, near the entrance of Maracaibo Lagoon. The inhabitants were alarmed. They did not flock to join him, for they had been told that he was an agent of England, and though many were eager to get rid of Spanish rule they did not want to be transferred to some other European flag. Miranda strove vainly to overcome this false notion of his aims. His long residence in London was against him. Nor could the naïve citizens of Coro distinguish between North American and English soldiers of fortune. Only one feature of the landing impressed them favorably, the fact that a Venezuelan leader had come to them from overseas, trained in European warfare and well armed. They had supposed that the revolution would have to depend wholly on local resources. The glamor of Miranda grew, which caused future expeditions to be warmly received.

But the impossibility of raising forces to combat the large army which the Spaniards were sending against him baffled the Precursor. He re-embarked and made his way back to England. A picture of him has been left us by James Biggs, one of his American followers, who criticized him as a general, but recalled his personality in the following colorful terms:



"Sweetness and warmth, says he, are the two greatest physical goods; and acid and cold are the greatest physical evils in the universe. He is a courtier and a gentleman in his manners. Dignity and grace preside in his movements. Unless when angry, he has a great command of his feelings; and can assume what looks and tones he pleases. In general his demeanour is marked by hauteur and distance. When he is angry he loses discretion. He is impatient of contradiction. He appears conversant on all subjects. His iron memory prevents his ever being at a loss for names, dates and authorities."

That Miranda had not learned his lesson about the perils of monarchial aid is shown by his eagerness to co-operate in a scheme whereby Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterward Duke of Wellington, would have led ten thousand men into Venezuela in 1808. England was then at war with Spain. But that same year Napoleon overthrew the Spanish Bourbons and occupied the Peninsula, setting up his brother Joseph as King. England decided to eject the French, a task for Wellesley, and again Miranda was brushed aside by his London friends. It was infinitely better for his land that this should have happened. The events in Spain had profoundly altered the motivation for revolt in the colonies. New chiefs were about to emerge, notably Miranda's glorious countryman, Simón Bolívar, the genius for whose coming it had been Miranda's destiny to prepare.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### BOLIVAR THE LIBERATOR

[SIMON BOLIVAR was beyond comparison the greatest man produced by any Caribbean country. Furthermore, he was the most famous of Spanish Americans, the liberator of four republics, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; the creator of one, Bolivia, which was called after him. His gifts as a soldier and statesman made his name illustrious all over the earth, during his own lifetime.] Those who came under his spell admired him to the point of idolatry. This can be readily understood. He was a Napoleonic figure at a time when Napoleon had captured the imagination of the world. In an age which found Byron supremely romantic, the personality of Bolívar struck the Byronic note. The combination caused men to follow him blindly, and devastated the hearts of women.

He had a profound passion for liberty. His political idealism was fully a century in advance of that of his contemporaries. There never was a less mercenary patriot; he spent his private fortune on the revolution, and would accept nothing that resembled a financial reward. The things he desired for himself were glory and the triumph of his ideas, and the people adored him for wanting these. Above all, there was his daemon, architect of victory. General Daniel Florencio O'Leary, an Irishman who served on his staff wrote of him:

"A creative genius *par excellence* . . . always great, he was yet greater in adversity. . . . Reverses lifted him above himself."

His example has influenced the generous youth of Spanish America up till the present day. Every revolutionist among them with the least pretensions to altruism and honor has dreamed of effecting his purpose after the pattern set by Simón Bolívar.

He was born in Caracas on July 24, 1783, the year of the independence of the United States. The Bolívars were colonial nobility, one of the richest and most influential families in Venezuela. They owned vast landed estates and a silver mine. This was not the background from which to expect a liberator, for although the Spaniards treated even the Bolívars with scorn, it is axiomatic that the well-to-do in an oppressed province dread a political change. They are favored mate-

rially under the system as it is. They cannot tell what a new order will do to property.

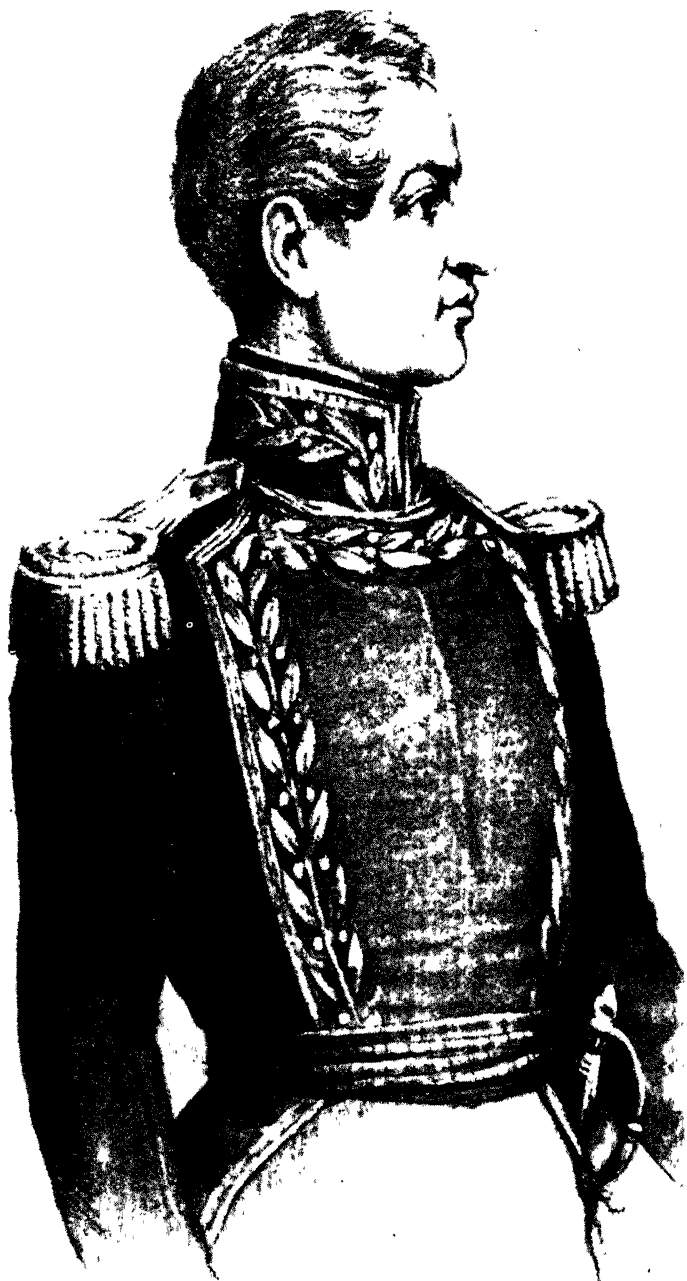
The biographers stress the fact that Simón's private tutor, Rodríguez, was an eccentric and a disciple of Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is obvious that the boy's affection for Rodríguez led him to accept Rousseauism at its face value, and that he never escaped from its terminology. But, as a man, he became wholly objective about political liberty. He would have smitten Spain even if he had not read a line by the visionary of Geneva, because he was instinctively a nationalist and a detester of tyranny.

He finished his education in Spain, where he married at the age of nineteen and took his bride to his country home near Caracas. She was dead within a year. The emotional shock to Bolívar was overwhelming. He returned to Europe, where for several years his life was that of a spendthrift and dilettante, his outward aspect one of graceful melancholy in the true Byronic manner. Yet he was fascinated by the dynamic events that were shaking the Old World, and far from indifferent to Venezuela. He said long afterward, "The death of my wife pushed me very early into politics."

The figure of Napoleon captivated him. He received an invitation to the latter's coronation in Notre Dame. The accounts differ as to whether he attended it. Some assert flatly that he sulked in his lodgings, unwilling to see the man who had been a hero to him indulge in the vanity of a crown. Others declare that he was present, and that he told a friend: "What was great to me was the universal acclamation and the interest which the person of Napoleon inspired. I confess, this made me think of my unhappy country and the glory which he would win who should liberate it."

The following spring, at about the time that Miranda was leaving London, to launch the coup that failed at Coro, Bolívar set out with his old tutor, Rodríguez, on a walking trip to Italy. They overtook the Emperor holding a military review on the plain of Montesquiaro, prior to his second coronation in Rome. Bolívar and Rodríguez made their way to the foot of the mound where Napoleon was enthroned, and several times he looked fixedly at them. "I directed all my attention on Napoleon," remarked Bolívar, "and saw only him in all that multitude." Yet he affirmed soon afterward that the Corsican had lost much by becoming Caesar.

In the Eternal City, he was as if intoxicated by the monuments of a vanished splendor. He climbed the Aventine Hill with his tutor on an afternoon of glittering sunshine, stared at the panorama below him,



*Courtesy of the New York Public Library*

*Fototipia Lacoste—Madrid*

SIMÓN BOLÍVAR



knelt suddenly and uttered the vow which is quoted on the title page of Part Three of this book. Rodríguez was beside himself with joy. Simón had always been to him the aristocratic child of nature for whom the noblest destiny was reserved, a character like one of Rousseau's heroes. The old man felt, too, that this scene marked the end of Simón's futile mourning for his dead wife. He was right.

During the next week, Bolívar was presented to Pope Pius VII at the Vatican and mortified his sponsor by refusing to kiss the Holy Father's sandal. "Let the Indian youth do as he pleases," murmured Pius and offered his ring, which was duly kissed. Explaining his youthful gesture, Bolívar said enigmatically, "The Pope can have little respect for the symbol of the Christian religion if he wears it on his sandals."

The return journey was made by way of the United States, where Bolívar visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Charleston, sailing for Venezuela from the last-mentioned port. He had closely observed the processes of democracy and found them admirable, but he did not make any North American friendships of lasting importance, as Miranda had done. At home, he retired temporarily to the country.

Then came the collapse of the Spanish monarchy before Napoleon. The Bourbon, Charles IV, had abdicated, but his son was proclaimed as Ferdinand VII by the loyalist opposition which refused to recognize Joseph Bonaparte. The colonies reacted in a way that could not have been predicted. Instead of seeing Napoleon as the heir of the French Revolution who would reform the worst abuses of the old order, the colonies foamed with rage against him and deported the commissioners he sent to claim the allegiance of Spanish America. One after the other, the viceroalties declared Ferdinand VII to be the rightful King. They denied the authority even of the Cortes of Cádiz, a reform legislature which met outside the Bonaparte zone of influence and wrote a constitution for the Hispanic Empire more liberal than had as yet been dreamed.

Minor revolts occurred in 1809. But 1810 proved to be the year of general revolution throughout Spanish America. Venezuela and Nueva Granada set up creole administrations, in the name of King Ferdinand as opposed to both the French and the Cortes. Many of the local leaders did this winking behind their hands, believing it to be the only way to grasp the reins of government and to prepare public opinion for independence. Simón Bolívar, young and inexperienced, but carrying weight because of his family, energetically supported the policy for his country.

The Supreme Junta at Caracas voted in the spring to send a diplomatic mission to London, to feel out the attitude of the British and ask for recognition, but was unable to raise funds for the purpose. Bolívar at once undertook to bear all costs, and was appointed the chief delegate. He sailed on June 9, with Luis López Méndez and Andrés Bello the gifted poet. His business with Wellesley was quickly settled. Exceeding his instructions, Bolívar solicited aid in severing the tie with Spain, and thanks to his guardian angel was rebuffed. He now went to Miranda, the man there is every reason to think he had really come to London to see. The veteran was brooding in his house in Grafton Street, amazed that events should have reached a denouement without him. Bolívar, aged twenty-seven, told Miranda, aged sixty, that it was his duty to lead the revolution that at last was ripe for him. They went back to Venezuela, were received in December with tremendous acclaim, and the business of building a republic began. Men ceased to pay lip service to Ferdinand VII.

The year 1811 was frittered away, while the Venezuelan Congress struggled with an impractical federalism which theorists were determined to write into the constitution. There was an uprising of Spaniards in July, brusquely crushed by Miranda as Commander-in-Chief of the army, in a battle at Valencia where Bolívar was first under fire.



The Battlefields of Simón Bolívar

The ardent youth distinguished himself, took the news of victory to Caracas, was given the rank of colonel. Similar events were transpiring in Nueva Granada, though with an unfortunate drift toward setting up rival states. Bogotá and Cartagena declared their independence separately. As neither section of the vicerealty had been cleared of European troops, the situation remained critical. There was a strong concentration of the enemy in the neighborhood of Maracaibo Lagoon, Venezuela, under Domingo de Monteverde.

Calamity marked 1812, year of the debacle of Napoleon at Moscow. On March 26, Caracas was rent by one of the most destructive earthquakes that ever visited it. Ten thousand persons were believed to have perished in that city alone. The port of La Guayra was leveled. Large detachments of patriot soldiers died in various camps. Immediately, monks sprang from their cloisters to scream that it was a visitation of Divine displeasure on an impious republicanism. While engaged in rescue work, Bolívar came upon a frenzied cleric who was haranguing a crowd to this effect, leaped with drawn sword to the platform and sent the fanatic flying. Soldiers took heart and drove all the monks to cover. But from that day, the Church used the earthquake as a text in opposing the democracy it abhorred.

Monteverde had already commenced to advance east from Maracaibo. He captured several towns, which he allowed his soldiers to sack mercilessly. Venezuela's First Republic tottered. The frightened Congress appointed Miranda dictator, but it had made no adequate preparations for defense, and the aging man who had commanded troops for Spain and France was openly contemptuous of the rag-tag forces which were now hurriedly assembled. He conceived of war, anyway, in the terms of pitched battles, with artillery support. He was unfitted to be a guerilla leader.

Nevertheless, Miranda attempted to save the party. He detailed Bolívar to hold Puerto Cabello on the Caribbean, withdrew behind Valencia and checked the first attack by Monteverde. Then he seemed bewildered, played too cautious a game. Bolívar lost Puerto Cabello, after a successful mutiny of prisoners in the fortress there, and the Precursor cried absurdly, "Venezuela is stricken to the heart!" In July, the latter consented to what Monteverde described as an armistice with guarantees of immunity to the patriots. Miranda had decided to leave the country. He showed the way in a general flight of revolutionary officers to La Guayra, where ships were available, and the Republic fell. Monteverde lost no time in violating the terms of the agreement; the day he entered Caracas a reign of terror began.



Bolívar was furious. He called a meeting of young officers in La Guayra, denounced Miranda to them as a traitor and insisted that he must be put to death. Their support obtained, he personally went to the ex-dictator's room and placed him under arrest. He confined him in the military jail, to be shot the next day. But the next day, the picture had changed. Spanish troops seized the port and all the Venezuelan fugitives, including Miranda, became captives of Monteverde. Let us be done briefly with the Precursor. His fate was lamentable. After four years of prison, he died of an apoplectic stroke in Cádiz, where a British naval officer reports having seen him "chained to the wall like a dog, with an iron collar around his neck."

They gave Bolívar a passport, to reward him, they said, for serving Spain by arresting Miranda, really to placate his family and powerful friends. He looked Monteverde hard between the eyes and said vehemently that he had acted to punish treachery to the Republic. They handed him a passport, anyway, thereby committing an irreparable blunder from their point of view.

If he had had any lingering doubt of his own capacity, it fell away. Simón Bolívar was transfigured. He became one of those phenomena which history furnishes rarely, a conqueror who cannot be thwarted, no matter how inadequate his means or how formidable the obstacles. Such a career demands great personal magnetism with which to obtain and hold a following, as well as a tenacious will power. Bolívar possessed these qualities to an extraordinary degree. He appears to have drawn much inspiration from the companionship of women. He had taken a sentimental oath never to remarry, but volumes could be written concerning his liaisons. The latter were intertwined with his heroic deeds. Manuela Sáenz, the mistress he loved best, actually rode at his side en route to more than one battlefield. This enhanced his glamor for a Latin soldiery.

He left La Guayra at the end of August, 1812, and landed on the Dutch island of Curaçao. In November he went to Cartagena, and there published a manifesto in which he pleaded with the people of Nueva Granada and Venezuela to work together to expel the Spaniards, and then to establish a strong centralized government. Without waiting to observe the impression created by this document, he volunteered for military service and was appointed to command the garrison at Barranca, at one of the mouths of the Magdalena River. The Spaniards held Tenerife, a few miles above, and though Bolívar had been ordered only to prevent them from reaching the sea, he went over

the head of his superior and got permission from the provisional Government to attack.

The first of his fabulous campaigns resulted. On December 22, he started with two hundred men and routed the five hundred Spaniards at Tenerife. He pressed up the valley of the Magdalena, clearing the foe out of the territory and reopening the river to navigation. He captured the important city of Ocaña on January 8, 1813. Recruits flocked to him. He defeated the forces he encountered, taking large stores of ammunition and more than a million pesos in cash, occupied town after town. Then he turned east, and on March 1 arrived at the Venezuelan border. It always had been his intention to make this a war for the redemption of his native country. But it would be too much to employ Nueva Granadan troops outside the province, unless the Congress which was sitting at Tunja gave him authority to do so. He waited restlessly for two months while his plea was being debated. His Cartagena manifesto counted now. Permission to advance arrived early in May, with the proviso that a military commission would follow and that he must consult it on matters of policy.

Bolívar did not wait for the commission. He never allowed it to catch up with him, though he meticulously prepared reports for its edification and sent these back by messenger at regular intervals. He stormed across Venezuela, beating down the Spaniards everywhere. They avenged themselves by practicing frightful cruelties. Monteverde came out to meet him, was smashed and forced to take refuge in the fortress at Puerto Cabello. At Trujillo, on June 15, Bolívar paused to issue a proclamation:

"Spaniards and Canary Islanders, count on death—even though you are neutral—if you do not work actively for the liberation of Venezuela! Americans, count on life, even if you are unworthy!"

On August 6, a few days less than a year after he had been dismissed from the country by Monteverde, he entered Caracas in triumph. He was given a Roman ovation, with artillery salutes, flowers and music. Twelve girls of the best families met him at the south gate with a chariot and drew him to the palace. He at once assumed the duties of a President. On October 14, he was officially named "El Libertador," the title he most valued to the end of his life. On January 2, 1814, he accepted the supreme dictatorship.

Yet this Second Republic was not grounded sufficiently firmly to survive. There emerged from the *llanos*, or plains, beyond the Andes an impromptu royalist leader, named José Tomás Boves, a Spaniard who

had formerly been a pilot and smuggler, but who had lived for some time among the cattlemen and acquired a strong influence over them. He had military talent, and his methods were incredibly brutal. No other opponent ever brought Bolívar so near to destruction. The counter-revolution raged through the early half of 1814, with victories on both sides. But in June, Boves worsted the patriot army at La Puerta and the capital fell to him. Bolívar, escaping eastward, was followed by almost the entire civilian population of Caracas, a tragic emigration in which thousands died on the way.

The Liberator sailed for Cartagena, via Curaçao, in September. It was no help to him that Boves was soon killed in battle. The Spaniards retained Venezuela.

Bolívar again offered his services to Nueva Granada and performed well. But on account of internal dissensions, he thought it better to resign in May, 1815, and went to Jamaica, a penniless exile. He had some hope of inducing the British Governor, the Duke of Manchester, to help him equip an expedition. Manchester received him courteously, evaded the object of his visit. In Kingston, Bolívar wrote the celebrated document known as his "Jamaica Letter," in which he stated lucidly the case for Spanish American independence. He proceeded to Haiti the following January, where Alexandre Pétion, the mulatto President, assisted him to move twice against the Spaniards, the first time abortively. On the second occasion, he landed December 16, 1816, at Barcelona, Venezuela, to wage the long and bitter war whereby he eventually freed his country.

The Spaniards had sent ten thousand soldiers to the Main, under an experienced General, Pablo Morillo. Bolívar, on his part, was strengthened by a more widespread ardor for secession among his people, and by the appearance of new military leaders, notably his most gifted lieutenant, Antonio José de Sucre, and the *llanero* guerilla chief, José Antonio Páez. The first phase reached its climax when the revolution was solidly established in the southern half of the province and a republican Congress met at Angostura, the temporary capital. Victories and heartbreaking reverses alternated. But in 1819, Bolívar executed a masterful coup, which would give him high rank among the world's captains even if he had won no other campaign.

He had taken the Spaniards by surprise six years before, when he had marched from Cartagena through half of Nueva Granada and into Venezuela. Now, when this was the last thing expected of him, he struck in the opposite direction. He led his army from the lowlands of the Orinoco into the Andes, crossed the Páramo de Pisva at an eleva-

tion of 13,000 feet, where soldiers had never been and where his endured hardships without parallel, entered the sister province and without pause for rest destroyed a thunderstruck Spanish force at Boyacá. This battle consummated the independence of Nueva Granada. When Bolívar entered Bogotá immediately afterward, the delirious welcome given him exceeded, if that were possible, his early triumph at Caracas. Men with tears streaming down their faces lined the streets. Women ran to throw themselves in front of him. It is recalled that one woman embraced his knees, crying, "God bless you, vision! [*fantasma*]" and that the Liberator smiled faintly, proudly.

Nueva Granada wanted to keep him, to make him dictator, to have him plan the future of the state. He considered it instantly important to finish his work in Venezuela, which he did with thoroughness. At Angostura, at the end of that year, he ordered his Congress to declare that the entire former viceroyalty, comprising the present Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, had been created a republic under the name of Gran Colombia. He was to hold this union together during most of his lifetime, against the will of the advocates of decentralization. But first he had to settle with the Spaniards in Venezuela. He accomplished it on the field of Carabobo, where he routed General Miguel de la Torre, successor of Morillo, June 24, 1821, and brought Iberian domination to an end. In that it was fought along the lines of grand strategy, that both sides exerted their maximum force, and that the results were definitive, Carabobo must be accounted Bolívar's greatest victory, though perhaps not his most brilliant one.

He was elected President of Gran Colombia, with dictatorial powers which he used moderately. He could have made himself Emperor. The idea was often urged on him, and by his closest followers. He rejected it indignantly. He left himself little time, in fact, to function as an executive. His duties were constantly being delegated to a vice-president. For [Bolívar pursued the dream of liberating all Spanish America and forming a single confederacy from Cape Horn to the northern borders of Texas and California.] This is not the place to discuss his extraordinary campaign southward, where he took up the work dropped by the Argentinian patriot, San Martín, destroyed the last vestiges of Spanish power on the continent and left two free daughters behind him: Peru, who bestowed upon him the title of "The Restorer"; Bolivia, whose boundaries he set and whose first constitution he wrote. Voted 1,000,000,000 pesos by Peru, he would accept the money only for schools in Venezuela.

[When he realized the impossibility of merging the republics, he im-

plored them at least to meet at frequent conferences and discuss their problems as New World powers. He foresaw international courts of justice, anticipated the work of the Pan-American Union in our times. A congress called by him to lay the groundwork of such a policy rallied the delegates of only four countries, and its work was ineffective. But it did sit at Panama from June 22 to July 15, 1826.□

Gran Colombia broke up into its three component parts, and Simón Bolívar, disillusioned, retired from public life on January 20, 1830. He started for Cartagena, to go into voluntary exile, was taken ill with pulmonary tuberculosis, which had long been creeping upon him, and died at the home of an acquaintance at Santa Marta on December 17, 1830, aged forty-seven. Twelve years later, his body was removed to Caracas, where it rests in an ornate pantheon surrounded by those of his Generals.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### AND OTHER REPUBLICS

[IN OTHER parts of the Caribbean region, the revolt against Spain followed a course similar to that of the Bolivarian movement, but under far less brilliant leadership and with modifications peculiar to the peoples concerned. Aztecs and related Indian tribes were among the earliest rebels. The *mestizos* followed, and the whites were the last to catch the flame. Priests—of creole birth, be it said—unexpectedly played a nationalistic role such as had been anathema to their fellows in the south. The democratic ideal was not so clearly understood. But Mexico and Central America held loyally to essentials, from 1810, birth-year of the revolution, until the 1820's when independence was attained. Cuba and Puerto Rico kept out of it, largely because of the Negro question and the object lesson afforded by Saint Domingue, where the French had been massacred. Spanish Hispaniola cut loose from the Republic of Haiti, but was reconquered and held by the blacks for twenty-two years.]

Mexico's story is naturally of first importance. Father Miguel Hidalgo, curate of the village of Dolores in the center of the country, had long been brooding over the despotism of the colonial regime when the events of 1810 stirred him to action. He was then fifty-seven years old, and for a priest he was decidedly unconventional. He had two illegitimate daughters living with him. His home was a meeting place of intellectuals, where books banned by the Church were read and discussed. Ten years before, he had been questioned and severely reprimanded by the Inquisition.

"It was alleged," writes William Spence Robertson, "that he studied the Holy Scriptures critically; that he spoke disdainfully of the Popes; that he showed little respect for the Apostles and for Saint Teresa; that he doubted the virginity of the Mother of Christ; that he declared fornication to be no sin; and that he lived an immoral life, forgetting the obligations of priesthood and indulging in music, dances and games. Several persons averred that the home of the curate . . . was known as 'Little France.'"

All of which did not alter the fact that he was a sincere patriot, or

deter republican thinkers and pious Indians from accepting him as their chief. His two most active supporters were militia officers named Juan Aldama and Ignacio Allende. They learned that their conspiracy had been discovered, so struck prematurely. At two o'clock in the morning of September 16, 1810, Hidalgo released the prisoners from the village jail, rang his church bell and when the populace assembled made the impassioned speech which launched revolution in Mexico. Like other leaders in the colonies, he declared allegiance to Ferdinand VII.

Six hundred volunteers, mostly Indians, rallied behind him. He used a painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe as his standard, and this moved the natives to frenzied devotion. She was their patron saint. Hidalgo marched through the countryside, practically unopposed and attracting such hordes that he was unable to control them. The garrison at Guanajuato, the provincial capital, was simply run over. Every Spaniard was butchered and the city looted, though Hidalgo did his utmost to prevent excesses.

He had evoked a mass uprising, chaotic and bloodthirsty, completely muddled as to its objectives. The cleric, hoping that it could be organized later, advanced on Mexico City with a following that is believed to have swelled to 100,000, many of the men armed only with clubs and stones. It is doubtful if so numerous a force had ever been assembled in the days of the Aztec Emperors. Nothing to be compared with it had been seen under the Spaniards.

Two thousand regulars attempted to halt the rush at Monte de las Cruces Pass, a few miles from that city, and were overwhelmed. The capture of Mexico was now a matter of choice. Father Hidalgo faltered at the prospect and turned aside to Querétaro, against the advice of his lieutenant, Allende. It has been conjectured that the priest dreaded a repetition of the Guanajuato orgy, and wished first to establish discipline in his army. Possession of the capital might or might not have won him the war, but retreat proved fatal.

A Spanish general of ability, named Felix Calleja, got together a small army, deployed it scientifically and whipped Hidalgo's mob. The Indians at once began to desert and, reduced to perhaps seventy-five per cent of his original strength, Hidalgo fell back on Guadalajara, a large city to the northwest, which he occupied. Calleja pressed him hard with fewer than ten thousand men. In January, 1811, Mexico's revolution was crushed at the Battle of the Bridge of Calderón. The leaders fled in a group, were overtaken and captured. Eighteen officers, including Aldama and Allende, were summarily shot for treason.

Hidalgo himself was tried with some ceremony, and of course found guilty.

They dressed him in his priestly vestments, which they tore from his back after they had paraded him publicly. He was then executed by a firing squad, decapitated and the head hung in a cage at Guajuato, as a consolation, maybe, to the relatives of those whom his parishioners had slain. The blackened skull was not taken down for ten years.

Another priest, José María Morelos, who had enlisted under Hidalgo, took charge of the remnants of the movement and developed it into a guerilla insurrection, which he handled with a military skill Hidalgo had never shown. Most of his operations were conducted south of Mexico City. Morelos saw that it would be childish to go on fighting in the name of Ferdinand VII. He summoned a patriot Congress, and on November 6, 1813, the independence of Mexico was declared, with himself as Provisional President and generalissimo. He won many fights, captured Acapulco after a seven-months' siege, then clashed disastrously with General Calleja at the end of 1815. Morelos was taken prisoner, contemptuously unfrocked as Hidalgo had been and shot to death.

Vicente Guerrero became the next chief with any claim to prestige. He and others managed to keep the revolution going for five years. It ceased to be an Indian movement, lost much of its hysteria, yet the upper class creole elements hesitated to join in until a leader appeared in their own ranks. The counterfeit man of destiny who finally materialized was Agustín de Iturbide, well connected, experienced in military affairs, and predominantly white with a dash of Indian blood.

He was born the same year as Simón Bolívar, and circumstances combined to give him every chance to imitate, though he could not have equalled, the career of the Liberator. But he was no Bolívar. He had found the Hidalgo rebellion distasteful because it allured the illiterate masses, and had brusquely refused an offer to command a patriot army at that time. As an officer in the colonial militia, he took the field against Morelos and rose to high rank. Up till 1820, he was regarded as a prop of the old regime.

Iturbide, however, saw clearly that the success of revolutions in South America, as well as the unbending medievalism of the restored Bourbons in Spain, made certain the growth of sentiment for a free Mexico. He intrigued until he had obtained the supreme command of royalist forces against Guerrero in the south, then entered into negotiations with the latter. They drew up a joint plan, which guaranteed



protection for the Roman Catholic religion and equal rights for Spaniards, and proclaimed the independence of the country with a compromise subtly suggested by Iturbide. Mexico was to be a kingdom; its crown was to be offered to Ferdinand VII, as a constitutional monarch. If he declined, another prince was to be chosen. This program was published on February 24, 1821, at Iguala, a small town, and is known in Mexican history as the Plan of Iguala.

"A more skillful plea for the support of all groups in Mexico could hardly have been devised," writes Charles Edward Chapman. "Clergy and one-time royalists, as well as revolutionaries, were attracted to the standards of Iturbide, and he soon had an army with which the Viceroy could not cope."

At the end of August, Juan O'Donojú, the last Viceroy of New Spain, capitulated and Iturbide entered the capital. As the creole schemer had undoubtedly expected, Madrid vetoed the Plan of Iguala. He waited for a few weeks, then engineered a military coup d'état and had himself nominated Agustín I, Emperor of Mexico.

Central America, meanwhile, had been fermenting since 1810. The fighting was desultory, partly because the regions of the captaincy-general were very thinly populated, with the exception of Guatemala, and partly on account of the conciliatory attitude of the Spanish authorities. In November, 1811, a priest named José Matías Delgado placed himself at the head of a revolt in the city of San Salvador. His movement quickly died down.

But with Mexican self-determination a reality, Central America took a stronger stand. It gained impetus from the action of Chiapas, a Guatemalan province, which seceded on its own account and obtained admission as one of the states of Mexico, which it still is. At Guatemala City, on September 15, 1821, Central America was declared independent, the form of government to be decided later. This did not include Panama, an *audiencia* of the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, which had been neutral in the revolution won by Bolívar, but which now severed the tie with Spain and annexed itself to Gran Colombia.

Iturbide was anxious to incorporate all Central America into Mexico. He urged this by means of a letter to the "Consultative Committee" of Guatemala, mouthpiece of the revolution there. The issue was voted upon by municipalities, and a favorable majority obtained. The union ostensibly became a fact in 1822.

On the map, Agustín I's empire now made an impressive showing. It included Texas and stretched from the far northern reaches of Cali-

fornia to the borders of Panama. It was the largest unit carved from the heritage of the conquistadores, potentially an empire more rich and populous than the United States. If it had held together, it would have dominated the Caribbean and could scarcely have failed to acquire Cuba, Puerto Rico and Spanish Hispaniola. Iturbide dreamed of this, but he was not the man to make such dreams come true.

Costa Rica and sections of Salvador and Honduras objected to the union from the start. They took up arms against it. A Mexican army came down and crushed the dissidents. This had just been accomplished in 1823 when a popular uprising deposed Iturbide, whose life was at first spared, but who was executed later on his attempting to start a counter-revolution. General Vicente Filísola, commander in Central America for the ex-Emperor, considered it his duty to give that section the chance to choose afresh. A Congress assembled in Guatemala City, which declared for independence "from Spain, Mexico, or any other power." Central America was a federated republic from 1823 to 1839, then broke up into the five existing republics of Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

With the fall of Iturbide, Mexico also became a republic, with Guadalupe Victoria as its first President. It soon fell under the domination of an uncrowned tyrant, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, against whose rule Texas revolted and established its independence in 1836.

Florida was only lightly touched by the fever for liberty which had swept Spain out of all her other continental possessions. There were secessionist outbreaks in the western province of the territory. To forestall England, the United States promptly seized it, on the pretext that it should properly have been transferred to her with the Louisiana Purchase. It is sometimes overlooked that Spain's willingness to sell the peninsula, or East Florida as it was then called, was influenced by her fear of a democratic revolution there, as well as by pressure from the United States and by England's known designs on the province. The treaty was arranged in 1819 and the transfer effected in 1821, coincident with Spain's definitive overthrow in Mexico, Central America, Nueva Granada and Venezuela.

The United States recognized the independence of Gran Colombia in June 22, 1822, and of all the other liberated countries within the next year. In his message to Congress of December 2, 1823, President James Monroe announced his celebrated doctrine that America should no longer be open to colonization by European powers, and that his Government "could only view the intervention of a European power in

America as the proof of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

As the present writer sees it, the era <sup>of revolt</sup> did not close with any event in the 1820's, marked by the hauling down of the Spanish flag in this place or that. It closed on December 17, 1830, when Simón Bolívar died. For every one of the new nations had been inspired in a greater or lesser degree by him, and with his passing they were left to work out their salvation through a century of chaos.]

## Part Four

### IMPERIALISM AND LIBERTY

*If the world were to select a spot for its capital, it would seem that the Isthmus of Panama must needs be chosen for this august destiny, situated as it is in the center of the world, looking in one direction towards Asia, in the other towards Africa and Europe, and equidistant from America's two extremities.*

—SIMÓN BOLÍVAR

### CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

### NEGRO EMANCIPATION

SLAVERY in the Caribbean region was doomed by the French Revolution and by the wars of independence that swept the French and Spanish colonies. These tremendous influences were bound to have weight in English-speaking territory, though the mercantile instinct and distaste for what was accounted the impulsiveness of Latin peoples deterred the young United States from extending liberty to Negroes. It was certain that Spain, in a spirit of defiance if nothing else, would retain human bondage in Cuba and Puerto Rico, her last footholds. But that England should do the contrary thing, should yield on this one point to the egalitarian mood of the times, was not so predictable.

We are apt to overlook the chronology of England's action as related to other events in the struggle for freedom. She outlawed the slave trade—a policy supported by the United States—immediately after Haiti cut loose from France and in advance of the great revolutionary movement in Spanish America. She proceeded to the abolition of slavery itself less than ten years after the last Hispanic colony became a republic.

European Governments saw the slave trade and emancipation as separate problems, and they were far more attached to the former than to the institution of slavery. The trade represented an outlet for capital, a way of using idle ships and employing idle sailors. It was not regarded as a service for the upkeep of each nation's agricultural colo-

nies; the living cargo was sold to any buyer. In the Caribbean there was keen competition for the business of the Spaniards, who had long since retired from the African end of the game. Even revolutionary France was reluctant to give up the profits of this traffic, as can be judged by the evasive nature of the debates on Negro rights in both the National Assembly and National Convention.

The traffic once abandoned, England and the lesser Powers involved were fairly indifferent to the type of labor utilized in the Tropics. Without a blush for their own past activity in stimulating it, they inclined more and more to the belief that slavery was economically unsound. This placed the defense of the system upon the colonies and the United States, in other words upon the countries which owned Negroes and did not wish to set them free. England could legislate for her unwilling subjects overseas and force them to accept the emancipation of the blacks. The United States could no longer be coerced; she arrived slowly at a blood-drenched solution, thirty years after the reform had been accomplished by England.

Let us trace the early phases of the process, as they affected the Caribbean. Denmark was the first country to abolish the slave trade, taking the step in 1792 at the height of the French Revolution and the horrors of the servile rebellion in Saint Domingue. She was importing at the time about two thousand Negroes a year, chiefly for sale at her free port of Charlotte Amalia, Virgin Islands. Moral honesty in a notable degree must be ascribed to the Danes, since every other nation had reacted violently in the opposite direction.

There had been agitation in England against the trade, backed by such men as Adam Smith, the economist; John Wesley, the founder of Methodism; and William Wilberforce, Member of Parliament. The last-named had persuaded the House of Commons, at the beginning of 1792, to adopt a measure which would have gradually reduced the traffic, but the bill had been beaten in the House of Lords. Despite his earnest efforts, the issue remained dead for the next ten years, because, as many historians have pointed out, the rise of liberalism in England was checked by the French Revolution and because events in Saint Domingue were felt to be a powerful argument against any change in the status of slavery. If England lacked the courage of Denmark, her excuse was her much larger territorial holdings and the danger of revolution among the 800,000 or more blacks living in them.

During this decade, France perforce disassociated herself from certain aspects of the iniquity. We have seen that the National Convention was unable to deny the logic of emancipation, especially after the rise

of Toussaint l'Ouverture, but that Napoleon attempted in 1802 to restore slavery. It is incontestable that, short of killing off the adult males and putting raw Africans in their places—a plan that was seriously mooted—the Emperor could not have accomplished his purpose in Saint Domingue. The attitude of the small islands, where self-government had not been attained, gives an idea of what would have happened. The Napoleonic decree was followed in Guadeloupe by hundreds of suicides, while four hundred former slaves blew themselves up in a fort rather than return to bondage. With the collapse of Leclerc's expedition, the Governors of other French colonies moved warily and revived the system only in part. During the Hundred Days, in 1815, Napoleon abolished the slave trade. But total manumission under the French flag was not granted until 1848.

The independence of Haiti strengthened the hands of Wilberforce and his fellow advocates of repression of the commerce in "black ivory." Bills passed the House of Commons in 1804 and 1806; they were thrown out by the Lords. Similar legislation mustered greater support in 1807, and of course was savagely attacked by West Indian absentee landlords and merchants doing business with the colonies. This lobby received the help of one of the King's sons, the Duke of Clarence, who later mounted the throne as William IV. Yet the bill was adopted by both houses that year, and became operative for vessels clearing out of British ports as of May 1, 1807, and for those arriving in the colonies as of March 1, 1808.

Almost simultaneously, the United States adopted a law prohibiting the traffic. It went into effect on January 1, 1808. Both countries realized that the kidnaping of Africans would continue, that efforts to smuggle them into America would occur on a gigantic scale, and that if there were any laxity in enforcement the reform would become a farce. They instituted naval patrols to cope with illicit traders, and ended by treating the latter as pirates. Sweden fell into line in 1813, Holland in 1814 and Spain in 1820.

England was notably active in the irregular warfare that resulted and that continued for roughly fifty years. The trade was kept down to a minimum but not eliminated, even with the disappearance of slavery in the British colonies. Dixie, Cuba and Puerto Rico remained as markets for Negroes up till the eve of the American War of Secession. The period, indeed, was marked by a general revival of piracy, traceable to the business of smuggling slaves. Desperadoes preyed upon the smugglers and passed from hijacking to the robbing of honest merchantmen. Jean Lafitte, of Louisiana, last Caribbean corsair whose

name has lived in history, operated along these lines until his death in 1826.

When Simón Bolívar made the revolution against Spain a reality in Venezuela, he adopted an advanced democratic policy toward helots of all races. Political recognition was at once extended to the Indians. Negro slaves who fought in the patriot armies acquired their freedom by that fact. General emancipation by individual masters was encouraged, with the implication that it would soon be obligatory. Bolívar, the true liberal aristocrat, treated his black followers with every consideration. In this he differed from Miranda, who nursed a virulent, unreasoned race prejudice and wished to bar Negroes from military equality, much less civil rights. The Liberator retorted sanely that persons of that race would form a large minority in the citizenry of the future, and that it would be short-sighted and unjust not to prepare them for their responsibilities.

In 1816, when he visited Haiti and was aided by Pétion to equip new forces, Bolívar gladly assented to the only favor the mulatto President asked in return: freedom for Venezuela's bondsmen. By decree and subsequently by an act dictated to his Congress at Angostura, Bolívar lost no time in keeping his promise. Such had been his intention, even if Pétion had not raised the point. With the forming of Gran Colombia, manumission spread to all parts of the former viceroyalty. But it was made to apply at first only to the children of slaves. Total emancipation followed.

Mexico lagged in promulgating the reform, largely on account of the influence exerted by the self-named Emperor, Iturbide. There were other difficulties. The vast Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain had embraced Central America as well as Mexico, and labor conditions varied in its widely separated regions. There were many Negro slaves along the Caribbean coast south of Yucatan, a few at Vera Cruz and other Gulf ports, a fair number in the populous city of Mexico. On the Pacific side, Negroes were almost unknown. The central plateaus, including Guatemala, comprised four-fifths of the exploited territory, and there the dependence was wholly upon Indian serfs, or peons, products of the ancient *repartimiento* system, who might be oppressed but were something more than slaves.

The white republicans had no notion of ending peonage, which was not ameliorated until the present century and many of whose evils still exist. They were lukewarm in 1821 on the question of Negro servitude, willing to see it go, but apprehensive about the psychological effect upon the Indians. Central America took the initiative after

the fall of Iturbide. The fact that a few thousand blacks had been freed scarcely penetrated the consciousness of the aboriginal masses. The governing class of Mexico then stifled their timidity and passed an emancipation law in 1829. The Indians, disillusioned and stoical since the failure of the Hidalgo revolution, failed to use it as an argument for the improvement of their own lot.

At the end of the epoch marked by Bolívar's death in 1830, slavery had been outlawed on the continental shores of the Caribbean Sea, and in Hispaniola. It persisted in the southern part of the United States, and in the Spanish, French and English islands. The last-mentioned, however, were about to witness its suppression as the climax of a long and hostile effort on their part which did them no credit.

The opposition of the planters to England's humanitarian mood dated back to the outlawing of the slave trade. The news was no sooner published in 1807 than furious protests were voiced in all the colonies. An example from Jamaica's annals will suffice to illustrate the general feeling. The House of Assembly considered a recommendation from one of its committees, that the appropriation for maintaining English troops in the country be withheld as a retaliatory measure. The debate was savage, and ended in a duel between the chief spokesmen on either side. The Assembly then passed a series of resolutions denying the authority of the British Parliament to enact legislation which interfered with colonial interests. But it eventually voted the money.

Contraband Negroes were bought thereafter and illicit dealers protected in a spirit of scornful levity, comparable to the absolute contempt for the law with which large sections of the United States defied the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution in the 1920's. The West Indian planters did not stop there. They perceived shrewdly that abolition of the trade would be followed by emancipation, unless conditions were created which would leave England with no stomach for the reform, or unless—as a last resort—English sovereignty were shaken off. Their attitude was similar to that of the whites in Saint Domingue. No genuine nationalist sentiment evolved, for these men had much less affection for the soil than the French colonists had had. Half of them were absentee landlords, all or most of the time. The policy was dictated by a mercenary clique in London, carried out by owners on the ground and salaried managers of estates.

It would be hard to imagine a more unenlightened policy. Missionaries who had undertaken the work of educating the slaves were persecuted. The Anglican Church, then a State establishment and quite indifferent to progress for the depressed classes, was declared by law



the only body competent to preach religion and teach ethics. Propagandists missed no chance to paint the Negro character as childishly irresponsible, a little above the level of the apes. Dire penalties for deeds of violence were inflicted in public squares with a great flourish of authority, partly to intimidate other bondsmen and partly to convince Englishmen that Negroes unrestrained by firm masters would commit ten times as many crimes. Improvements in the code for the protection of slaves were resisted. One such amendment demanded by the House of Commons in 1823 led the Jamaica Assembly to memorialize the King as follows:

"If this island is to be the scene of a dreadful experiment, we claim that we may not be involved in the awful consequences. If slavery be an offence to God, so are anarchy, desolation and blood. Let your royal Parliament become the lawful owner of our property by purchase, and we will retire from the island, and leave it a free field for modern philanthropy to work upon."

By "a dreadful experiment," the planters who dominated the Assembly meant the impetus toward freedom which they felt the reform would give, and in the last analysis they meant freedom itself. At about this time, a minority among them advocated a transfer of allegiance to the United States. There can be no doubt that these would-be secessionists leaned to the South, and had nothing but hatred for the abolitionist North. They regarded the United States not as a Federal republic, but as a loose alliance of dominions in which a semi-independent Jamaica could work out her destiny comfortably.

The other British colonies were less vehement than Jamaica, but with the exception of Trinidad their problems were identical and were faced in the same purblind manner. Trinidad, a recent acquisition, had not been accorded representative government. The mild Spanish slave code had been retained, and the House of Commons improved it by direct legislation. The small number of Negroes found there had been augmented by free colored laborers, mostly demobilized veterans of the American War of 1812, as well as importations of Chinese. Trinidad was but vaguely conscious of its political existence, a condition that grew worse, since the island became the model in the West Indies for that British anomaly known today as Crown Colony rule.

It must not be thought that the older communities solidly supported the planters' program. Minorities hostile to slavery existed in all the units. Able leaders were produced, the most interesting being Edward Jordon, of Jamaica, who, despite the presence of a little Negro blood

in his veins, won election to the Assembly and rose to the highest offices that it was possible for a man born in the colony to attain. Jordon published a weekly paper, the *Watchman*, in which he tirelessly attacked the system. For penning the moderate phrase, "Knock off the fetters and let the oppressed go free," he was tried for sedition and discharged only on a technicality.

The influence of such men as Jordon must have appeared negligible under the blue skies, in the shimmering heat-haze, of those lands where the sugar monopoly had been sacrosanct so long. But they had the growing army of European liberals on their side.

In 1833, both Houses of Parliament adopted a bill which ostensibly ended slavery, as of August 1 the following year. All bondsmen were converted into "apprentices" during an intermediary period, which in most cases was to be six years; a forty-five hour week was established and Sunday labor prohibited; any apprentice might purchase his discharge at the price of the appraised value of his services for the unexpired portion of his term. An indemnity grant of £20,000,000 was voted outright from public funds, to be divided among former slave-holders.

The planters raged against this solution, but were not prepared to resist it under arms. Grudgingly, the various Caribbean colonies passed assenting acts, save in Trinidad which was voiceless. Antigua decided to forego the period of apprenticeship, and emancipation went into effect there in 1834. The term was subsequently reduced from six to four years by parallel legislation in England and her tropical possessions. On August 1, 1838, the last slave under the British flag—or last apprentice, if one prefers the euphemism—obtained his corporeal liberty. Nothing whatsoever was done to assure his future in society. But the transaction was accomplished peacefully, and with a minimum of ill will between whites and blacks on the plantations.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

### THE PLANTATION COLLAPSES

NO MATTER how strongly one feels on the subject of human bondage, it would be unrealistic to deny that emancipation dealt a killing blow to the old planter class in the English and French Caribbean colonies. It meant the ruin of their economy based on such crops as sugar, tobacco, coffee and cotton. Above all, sugar. A number of contrary arguments may be conceded without dispute. It is true that sugar was no longer the bonanza that it had been in the last half of the Eighteenth Century, that it was rapidly becoming less and less profitable, and that in the English islands at any rate the plantation system appeared to be doomed before emancipation was voted. Free labor, if securely rooted, constituted the best support for a debilitated industry. The co-operation of all elements, which was so urgently needed, could not possibly be obtained unless fundamental justice to the enslaved were first done.

But it is equally true that if the planters were to have had the least chance of squeezing through the crisis, their method should not have been disrupted without furnishing a new and practicable one. Far from being rooted in the social order, the liberated Negroes were cast adrift, homeless, ignorant, undisciplined, and without a voice in the government since the suffrage was on a property basis. Their co-operation could not be expected in the circumstances. Obviously, they would work only when they felt like it, or under the pressure of hunger.

Cuba and Puerto Rico, meanwhile, the former affording a magnificent reserve acreage virgin to sugar, were entering the field on a grand scale—and with slave labor. This competition next door increased the difficulties of other Caribbean planters to the thin edge of calamity. It was not that Cuban sugar could be sold in England, to the detriment of Jamaican sugar. The protectionist policies of the day stopped that. But England was now also patronizing the immense new plantations under her flag in India, and trying to dispose of the surplus from both the western and eastern tropics to the countries of northern Europe. The latter market was equally open to Cuban sugar, which could be produced very cheaply and was certain to force out an article made expensive by labor that was casual as well as free.

In the light of the only political science it knew, English liberalism took an honest, uncompromising stand. Emancipation must prevail. If that meant the fall of the planter class, let it fall. The doctrine of *laissez faire*, beloved by infatuated democrats, made it unnecessary, nay immoral, to guide the economic future of a country. The owners of sugar estates still had their property, and were free to succeed or fail at rendering it profitable. The former slaves were free to work or to starve.

We shall never know whether the large, monopolistic plantation would have survived in the British West Indies, had there been no Emancipation Act. Probably it would not. There was worse to come, from the sugar growers' point of view. In the 1840's England adopted Free Trade and all tariff advantages which colonial products had enjoyed were wiped out. But it is clear enough why the gilded industry of other days had fallen so low that it could not readjust itself to either the Emancipation Act or Free Trade, and collapsed under the weight of the two combined.

The rivalry of Oriental and Cuban cane sugar constituted one part of the trouble. The other was the rivalry of newly discovered sweets, notably beet sugar.

During the Napoleonic Wars, most of continental Europe was seriously hampered by the English naval blockade in receiving West Indian cargoes. The lack of sugar was felt keenly, because this substance had ceased to be a luxury and was regarded as an essential foodstuff. The amount which could be imported overland from Asia was fractional compared with the demand. Napoleon, therefore, encouraged scientific research for substitutes and offered large cash prizes for any which could be manufactured in commercial quantities.

Saccharine crystals were made from grapes, apples, figs, plums, pears, mulberries, quinces, chestnuts, sorghum and cornstalks. The best of these was grape sugar, of which France fabricated with difficulty 500 kilograms in the year 1811, as against 2,000,000 kilograms of grape syrup. Plainly, only the syrup could conceivably fill the bill. But the yield of wine would be reduced and, like honey, grape syrup had the qualities of a confection rather than a kitchen staple.

An investigator stumbled upon the white beet of Silesia. It had been grown for centuries in that German province as a forage crop. As early as 1747, sugar had been extracted from it, and in 1801 a small factory had been established in Breslau to refine and popularize the product. It did not seem to hold out much promise of mercantile success. The sugar content of the roots was about five per cent, which necessi-

tated the crushing of several cartloads to obtain a few pounds of crystals. This kept the price high.

With his usual intuition, Napoleon concentrated on the white beet. He ordered extensive experiments to evolve a better root, and this was accomplished by means of seed selection, a study of soils and the use of fertilizers. A rapid augmentation of sugar content was followed by the planting of tens of thousands of acres, and in a few years a substitute which could hardly be told from cane was offered in the cities of Europe. The improvement has continued. The commercial beet of today is often more than twenty per cent saccharine.

When peace was restored after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the British West Indies immediately benefited by the opening of European ports. The vicious regulation which forced colonial goods to pass through England and pay a tribute to middlemen still prevailed. Even so, comparative figures tell their tale. In the darkest of the war years, the Caribbean plantations had sold 8,175 hundredweight of sugar, whereas the total for 1815 was 379,097 hundredweight. Concurrently, since there had been an actual shortage, the wholesale price almost doubled. Beet sugar was fondly supposed to have been nothing but a stop-gap. It continued to be manufactured with ever-increasing efficiency until the market was glutted. The old colonies experienced a new decline, which they were never again able to halt to an appreciable extent.

Fiscal juggling on the part of England, which had always been irksome, now did them great harm. The preferential tariff had favored their goods over those of foreign countries, and in some cases of other British colonies. But they did pay customs duties, and these were changed arbitrarily to protect English manufactures. At times, rum paid such heavy duties that it was automatically barred from competition with whisky. The details need not be rehearsed here. It suffices to say that the interests of the colonies were held to be secondary to those of England, and this spirit governed every readjustment. Territories with fresh and unlimited agricultural resources could stand it. The exhausted sugar lands of the Caribbean could not.

The planters sought other outlets. They launched a campaign for unrestricted trade with the world and the United States in particular. They demanded a relaxation of the navigation system which required that colonial imports and exports should be carried in English bottoms. Concessions along this line were made. It may be said that, despite certain reservations, a series of laws enacted in 1822 and 1825 ended the practice of a tropical trade monopoly which England had imitated from

Spain. Commerce between the islands and North America boomed. But it took until 1830 for tariffs to be so arranged that the planters were selling surplus sugar and coffee at a profit in the United States, and buying indispensable stores, such as salted fish, in the cheapest market.

England then equalized the duties on sugar from all her colonies and protectorates. She emancipated the slaves. Costs of production in the West Indies went higher. The Orient undersold the Occident in Europe, and the margin of safety which the budding trade with North America had spelled for the islands became their chief reliance. It could not be developed rapidly enough to save the planter class—partly, maybe, because of the mortal evil of absentee landlordism. Their ruin was completed in the following decade, when Free Trade went into effect in Britain and cheap sugar from all over the world bankrupted their London agencies.

The reader must not imagine that the above set of circumstances brought planting to an end in the British Caribbean, or that the later and similar troubles of the French, Dutch and Danish possessions caused any such result. The cane continued to be cultivated. It has been the means of livelihood of a good many persons up to the present day. Rum, its by-product, is a more valuable commodity than it was a century ago. Other old crops, especially coffee, cocoa and tobacco, have had their boom periods.

What occurred after the freeing of the slaves was the liquidation of a system of landowners engaged in the mass production of a former rarity. The system could have been propped up, and it might then have evolved slowly into a better order. But the harsh, swift cure was applied. The plantations were abandoned for debt in a large number of cases. Some of these were acquired by men who operated them more conservatively. Others were divided into small holdings and sold on time to the thriftier type of Negro. Perhaps one-third were retained by the original proprietors, members of that minority of British whites who had always had the good sense to live on the land. Diversified harvests were sought, though not so generally as the case demanded. Attention was paid to the improvement of livestock.

It is certain that no one suffered who was willing to maintain his family on a tropical holding, large or small, and to accept philosophically those years when it was impossible to earn a cash profit. The landless ex-slaves had a harder row to hoe; the writer leaves the study of their problem to the sociologists.

Politically, the overthrow of the sugar barons set the stage in the British colonies for the emergence of nationalism, and in the French

or an amazing identification with the republicanism of France. The Europeans and creoles of pure Caucasian stock who felt no attachment to the Caribbean scene got out at once. Those who remained clung to the full measure of their ascendancy as long as possible, and in some islands they still retain it. Broadly speaking, the British West Indian whites resisted with rancor the participation of colored men in affairs of state, but were unable to prevent it. The French whites yielded the point gracefully, the moment they were challenged by members of the subject race with sufficient force of character and intelligence to merit a hearing.

Nationalism under the Union Jack, therefore, was a thing of sluggish growth, persistently discouraged, yet unescapable for persons of all shades of complexion. It will be seen that the English rulers tried to throttle it by means of the wretched subterfuge of Crown Colony government.

France's policy created a genuine harmony between the parent land and her tropical offspring. After Napoleon III lost his throne, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Cayenne were accorded membership in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in Paris, on an equal footing with the home Departments. Local administration was placed in native hands, and natives were now and then appointed Governors.

But the factor that counted most was the sympathetic absorption of French culture by colonials of African descent. An educated black of Martinique, for instance, feels himself spiritually a Frenchman, and is in fact much more of one than any colored man is ever a Britisher or an American. The same is true of the citizens of Haiti. That country had no sooner won its independence at a monstrous price of tears and blood than it turned to France as the supreme source of literature, art, political theory and the philosophy of justice. The writer is convinced that French culture is uniquely suited to the Negro race.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

### THE REPUBLICS IN CHAOS

[BOLIVAR had created nations, but the objective which he regarded as being of next importance—the unification of Spanish America—eluded him and those few among his emulators and successors who shared the ideal. A single confederacy never had been practicable. Bolívar himself understood this by the time he founded Gran Colombia, which embraced all the territory of the ancient viceroyalty, including the Isthmus of Panama. But the component parts of his republic could not be held together. Nor could those of Peru and Central America. In the Caribbean region, Mexico came closest to preserving her old boundaries under independence, though the Anglo-Saxon advance in the north was soon to wrest Texas from her. The sections were driven apart by a centrifugal force, and in addition a deadly impulse to make a habit of revolt manifested itself.]

Some of Bolívar's own lieutenants were the first offenders. General José Antonio Páez, the cavalry leader from the Orinoco *llanos*, summoned a convention shortly before the Liberator's death, and through its agency set up Venezuela as a separate republic. This was the man who had been more vocal than any other in urging Bolívar to assume an imperial crown and extend his scepter over half of South America. Páez, of course, became chief executive. He governed firmly. The next President was deposed, and Venezuela plunged into an orgy of revolution. For twenty years, only Páez or satellites of his, were able to stay in power for any length of time, but in the end the picturesque *llanero* was driven into exile. He died in New York at the age of eighty-three.

Nueva Granada, which eventually adopted the name of Colombia, struggled through the early period with less tumult. The first President of the restricted state was General Francisco de Paula Santander, who had been Vice-President under Bolívar and, because of his probable guilty knowledge of a plot against the Liberator's life, had been expelled from the country. He returned chastened, called himself "Man of the Law," and while ruthlessly crushing all conspiracies against himself, did foster a respect for the constitution. There was much disorder in the late 1830's, but a better era began with the administration of Pedro A. Herrán in 1842.



Ecuador's travail was more anguished and irrational. This thinly populated mountain country erred in nurturing a frenzied localism. It had been only a presidency of the Spanish viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, and on the other hand its interests lay with Peru rather than with the north. Its aborigines were of the Inca and not the Chibcha strain. It would have done well to attach itself permanently to one of its stronger neighbors. But on the departure from office of Bolívar, General Juan José Flores, aged thirty, who had fought loyally under him, executed a coup d'état in Quito and proclaimed a republic. He actually inaugurated an epidemic of civil wars, which decades later produced the honest but medieval-minded dictator, Gabriel García Moreno. It suffices to mention that Moreno consecrated the republic, by law, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and clothed the Church with powers greater than those of the State. Ecuador, upon its separation from Nueva Granada, ceased to concern the Caribbean.

The tragic story of Central America throughout the half-century that followed independence was shaped by two major factors: the attempt to achieve a union, and the animosity between clericals and anti-clericals. There was no good reason why the captaincy-general of Guatemala, as the Spaniards called the region, should not have held together. As we have seen, a single government was established when the fall of Iturbide decided the country to end its brief association with free Mexico. But the five provinces were all torn by feuds between Conservatives and Liberals, the first being bigoted Catholics and the second free-thinkers. Unluckily, the factions believed that neither side could count on dominating the central authority for long. So they concentrated in small areas and whipped up an artificial nationalism. Francisco Morazán, an extreme liberal, was the last President before the federation crumbled in 1839 under the attacks of Rafael Carrera, an illiterate half-blood youth whom the Church accepted as its champion because of the hordes of superstitious Indians he had drawn to his standard.

The ebb and flow of partisan politics led to infinite complications. Carrera became the dictator of Guatemala and made that country a Conservative stronghold for a generation. Morazán, driven into exile, returned and seized the power in Costa Rica. He was overthrown by clericals, dubbed *Serviles* by their scornful foes, and executed. Costa Rica, the republic with the largest white population, entered a period of relative tranquillity. The Liberals were generally in the saddle in Honduras and Salvador. Nicaragua suffered grievously, for the two parties were about of equal strength, and this fact paved the way for

the bizarre adventure of the North American filibuster, William Walker.

Several fresh unions were attempted. All fell short of joining the five states, and due to their partial scope, if for no other reason, they failed.

In Mexico, the revolutionary era that succeeded Iturbide's empire was the more disastrous because it involved a large country, and because the leaders appeared to be motivated only by the basest personal ambition. General Victoria, the first President, succeeded in lasting his four-year term, and in bringing about the election of his Secretary of War, Pedraza, over General Vicente Guerrero, the chief surviving hero of the revolution against Spain. At once there was an appeal to arms under Santa Anna. The latter established the terrible precedent of installing a defeated candidate, which he and many others after him were to evoke on their own account. It simply inspired another revolt and the treacherous murder of Guerrero.

Santa Anna engineered his election in 1833, and thereafter paraded in and out of the presidency until 1855, sometimes as a man on horseback, at other times observing the forms of constitutionality. The odd mixture of statecraft, bombast and ferocity in his character gave the world a serio-comic impression of enthroned brigandage. He lost Texas by his egregious blundering. Turning in his tracks, he dispersed a force the French had landed at Vera Cruz to collect a debt. One of his legs had to be amputated for grapeshot wounds after this affray. He ordered a state funeral for the severed limb, then hobbled about the land extolling himself. He rubbed shoulders with the mob at cockfights, which he adored, yet upheld the interests of the upper classes. The debacle of Mexico in the war of 1848 with the United States was largely his fault. Yet he was able to resume power within five years of its close. It is safe to say that the Spanish American dictator of popular fiction in the Nineteenth Century was drawn directly from Santa Anna.

What caused Mexico and her fellow offshoots of the old regime to distort republicanism so grotesquely? Why was the example of the great Bolívar ignored by the majority once independence had been won? Why did the *caudillo*—the individual chieftain—no matter how unworthy, become everything and the principles of government nothing, during a long, long period of national adolescence? These questions have puzzled historians. The writer thinks it self-evident that all this was a legacy from Spain's abominable misrule, which debarred the colonial peoples from gaining the least practical experience in administering their own affairs, or studying the methods of foreign states. Democracy, obtained at a stroke, proved too subtle to be

grasped. It was regarded as a synonym for independence—a condition which enabled men to do as they pleased. A structure for the use and preservation of liberty had to be created from the void. It has come into being in many of the republics. Others are still groping with the problem.

The period of chaos for Spanish America was momentous in the history of the Caribbean Sea. The latter's third phase of world importance began at that time. The first phase was that of the discovery and its effects on Spain, the feature of vital moment being the existence of the Isthmus of Panama which afforded an easy means of communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The second was that of the sugar bonanza, marked by intense naval rivalry between England and France, who with Dutch aid had previously broken Spain's monopoly of the lands surrounding the Sea. The new and last phase centered once again about the Caribbean as maritime lobby to the Orient sailing west, the indispensable complement of the Mediterranean as maritime lobby to the Orient sailing east. But science had given a fresh splendor to the idea. It had come to be held quite practicable to dig a canal at Panama, the southern end of Nicaragua, or the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico.

The thing was often discussed in the 1830's and early 1840's, but remained academic because of the vast cost of such an undertaking and the relatively small traffic in sight for a through route. No interoceanic canal had as yet been dug. Though Suez was a far easier task, it had not been attempted. But in 1849 gold was discovered in California, and the resultant rush of adventurers clamored for a safer, less arduous way of transit than the journey in covered wagons across the North American plains infested with wild Indians.

Projects for a canal became of intense interest to the United States in particular and the world in general. The urgent need for a sea route to California opened the eyes of statesmen to the fact that there were other undeveloped lands on the Pacific with which it would soon be highly profitable to trade. Australia, the East Indies, China and the West Coast of South America could be, and should be, brought closer to Atlantic ports. The future role of the Caribbean was perceived. The United States had previously regarded the sea merely as a field for commercial enterprise. Overnight she adopted a policy, never abandoned, of controlling the sea because of its value in connection with the canal, or canals, that would lead out of it.

She had already, in 1846, concluded a precautionary treaty which guaranteed the neutrality of the province of Panama under Nueva Gra-

nadan sovereignty, and granted to the United States transit rights on the Isthmus by any existing or future modes of communication. The excitement of '49 brought English as well as North American agents to Panama and to Nicaragua, eager to acquire concessions for a canal. They blocked one another for the time being. The upshot was the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty between the two Anglo-Saxon powers, which bound them "never to obtain or maintain any exclusive control" over a ship canal in either country, and "never to fortify or exercise dominion" at the crucial points.

The catch lay in the word "exclusive." It committed them to a joint venture or none, and both preferred to wait. Yet the immediate advantages were won by the United States. She got a contract for a private company of her nationals to build and operate a railroad from Colon to Panama, and this work was begun at top speed in 1850. There was also formed a concern called the Accessory Transit Company, owned by Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York, which secured a charter from the Nicaraguan Government to convey passengers and goods by the following route:

From the Caribbean port of San Juan del Norte, or Greytown, up the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua, eighty-five miles in a straight line; across the lake, seventy miles; across the neck of land between the lake and the Pacific Ocean, sixteen miles. The river could be laboriously navigated by light-draft boats, but the lake was deep. Stage-coaches covered the final short lap overland. The entire route constituted a depression in the mountain range which runs like a spine from one end of the continent to the other. For canal purposes, the river bed would have to be deeply excavated and the neck cut at Rivas.

Vanderbilt made transportation in Nicaragua pay a heavy profit from '49 on. There was a continuous stream of gold hunters and settlers, with their impedimenta, bound for San Francisco. The opening of the Panama Railroad seemed merely to stimulate additional travel. The Commodore's route was the more popular, because the shorter and cheaper one. He put the finest packet boats into service between New York and San Juan del Norte. His venture became big business.

But he had very little comprehension when he started of the vendetta between Conservatives and Liberals that made Nicaragua a dangerous country for foreign capital. Nor had he paid any attention to an astounding adventurer among his own people, who was about to take a hand in that part of the world.

The factions had as rival headquarters the city of Granada, home of the rich creole families, traditionally Conservative and Catholic;

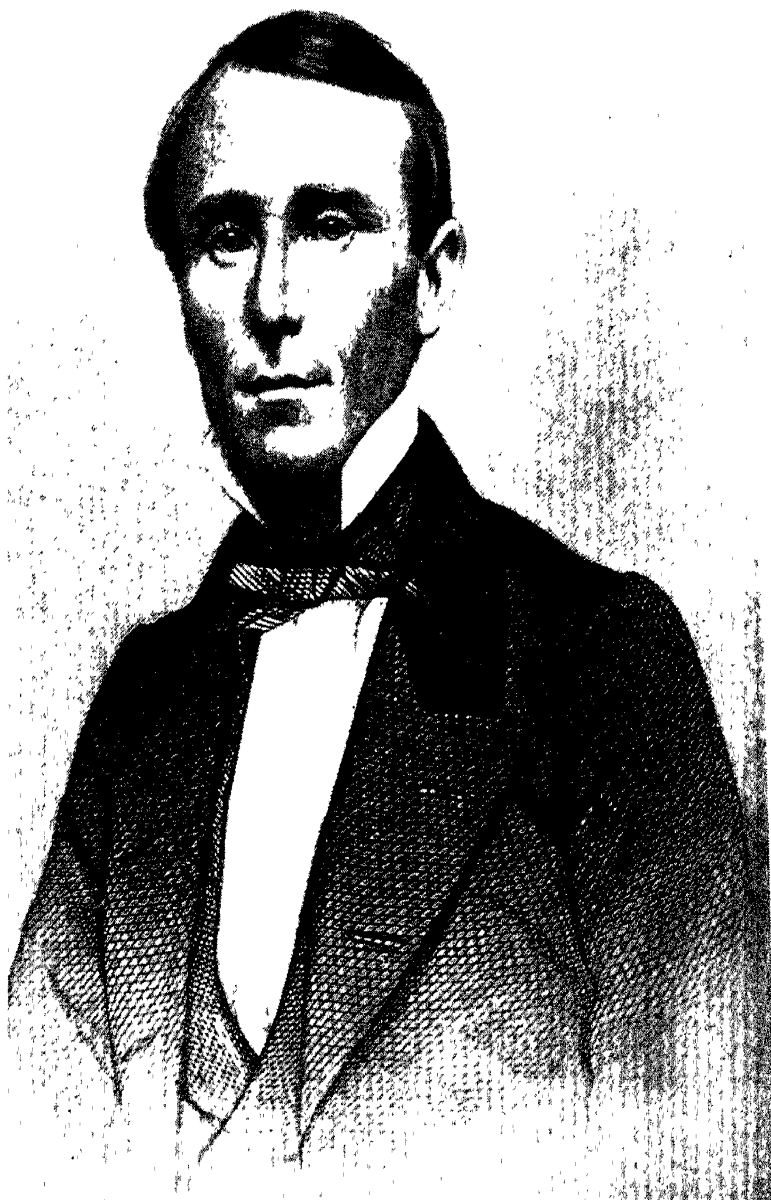
and the city of León, center of a region of small planters, Liberal and anti-clerical with dogmatic fervor. They had fought each other since the collapse of the Central American union. The Conservative, General Fruto Chamorro, held the presidency at the time of the contract with Vanderbilt. But the Liberals had set up their own administration in León, which they proclaimed the capital. Guatemalans aided the Conservatives and Hondurans the Liberals in the sporadic fighting.

The people of León then decided to shop for aid among the professional swashbucklers to be found in New York, New Orleans and San Francisco. They attracted a man whose brief life had been a portent, William Walker of Tennessee. He was a firm believer in slavery, resented the policy which strove to keep the institution out of the western territories of the United States, and foresaw the armed struggle that was coming between North and South. He had graduated both in medicine and law at an early age, but preferred journalism and at twenty-four became editor and part owner of a New Orleans newspaper. Upon the death of his sweetheart of yellow fever in that city, he dedicated himself to as arrogant and audacious a plan as was ever conceived by one who had had no military experience. He proposed to conquer all Mexico and Central America, and create a slave empire there under Anglo-Saxon tutelage, to offset the growing influence of the Yankees.

The idea took on more modest forms, but the motive remained. Walker dreamed of being a tower of strength to Dixie, and beginning without resources he won halfway triumphs of a sensational character.

In 1850, he joined the California gold rush. Mining was not for him. He practiced journalism and law until he had collected followers for a coup against Mexico. It was his intention to take Sonora and the peninsula of Lower California, set up a republic and later appeal for admission to the Union after the pattern set by Texas. He led two expeditions in 1853 and 1854, was forced back over the border, tried in the United States for filibustering and acquitted. These proceedings gave him a reputation, particularly as he had shown great aptitude for leadership.

Go-betweens acting for the Liberal Party of Nicaragua approached Walker early in 1855 and persuaded him, more easily than they realized, to transfer his activities to that republic. He sailed from San Francisco with a small contingent of daredevils, who were afterward known in the United States as "the Fifty-Six Immortals" and in Nicaragua as "the American Phalanx." Nearly every one of those men lost his life in



*After an engraving by I. C. Buttre; from "The Story of the Filibusters," by J. J. Roche*

**WILLIAM WALKER**



battle or by disease. Arrangements were made for others to enlist and follow.

Walker reached León, where he was given an exuberant welcome. Only 175 native soldiers were waiting to join him, but another ship brought him a few more volunteers. At the head of a force numbering 377, of whom 100 were North Americans, he occupied the Accessory Transit road, crossed the lake and seized the city of Granada on October 15. He set up Patricio Rivas as puppet chief executive, declared himself Commander-in-Chief of the army and assumed dictatorial power. They called him the "Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny," awed by the lightning success of this taciturn individual who weighed about a hundred pounds, whose face was a mass of yellow freckles, and whose tow-blond eyebrows and lashes scarcely veiled the metallic gray eyes. He was thirty-one years old.

By means of candid advertisements printed in American newspapers, Walker recruited hundreds of immigrants who had been promised free land, but who were conscripted for the army the moment they arrived. This was no surprise to most of them, for they had expected to do military service. A move by Costa Rica to expel the soldier of fortune was repulsed. Walker's army, including natives, rose to 1,500 men. It is the opinion of historians that his control of Nicaragua was now absolute, and that if his statecraft had been equal to his fighting qualities he could have stayed in control. But he committed a series of blunders.

In June, 1856, he deposed Rivas and had himself elected President. This alone would not necessarily have been fatal. Central America divided into two camps. Costa Rica, Guatemala and Salvador were opposed to Walker, but Honduras supported him. Furthermore, the minister he sent to Washington was recognized by President Franklin Pierce, urged to this course, it is said, by his Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis. Victory in a war that would have swept all Central America into a single state under Walker was not impossible.

The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny wrecked his prospects as the result, mainly, of two arbitrary acts. He decreed the restoration of slavery before he had the power to enforce it, which turned large numbers of Nicaraguans and Hondurans against him. He confiscated the property of Vanderbilt's Transit Company, declared the franchise forfeited and sold the ships and right of way to another American concern. Wounded in the pocketbook, his tenderest spot, the Commodore showed a belligerency which the tremendous issues in his own land never aroused. He vowed to destroy William Walker, and with the limitless funds at



his disposal he was able to accomplish this. On his side was England, who had revived her spurious claim to the Mosquito Coast and kept warships in the vicinity to impede any venture, such as Walker's, which might clash with her designs on the canal route.

Vanderbilt backed the Costa Rican Army, supplied it with modern weapons and employed English adventurers to stiffen its morale. It crossed the San Juan River in force, recaptured the eastern end of the transit line and shut off Walker's flow of re-enforcements from New York and New Orleans. The heaviest fighting occurred around Granada, which the dictator burned when he could no longer hold it. The allies then ruined him by a policy of attrition. He was reduced to a band of 463 men, with which to stand off 17,800, of whom 11,500 were from countries other than Nicaragua. On May 1, 1857, he surrendered at a Pacific port to a United States warship, which had offered safe transport home to the filibusters.

Walker was treated as a hero not only in New Orleans and other Southern cities, but in New York. If he had been satisfied to let the Nicaraguan decision stand, he could have obtained support for no matter what undertaking in fields where his fame was untarnished. His contemporaries thought him a prodigy. But misdirected tenacity was a vice with him. He instantly started to gather a new force, and before the year was out he landed at San Juan del Norte. The coup had been in defiance of a warning from the United States Government. Commodore Paulding brought up a squadron, obtained his capitulation and took him back to New Orleans. He was placed on trial for violating the neutrality laws and got a hung jury.

Late in 1859, Walker struck for the third time, landing in Honduras and meeting with temporary success. He set up his headquarters in Trujillo, which he declared to be a free port. A British naval commander, Salmon, used the excuse that the customs receipts of Trujillo had been pledged to English bondholders as security for a loan, sent a landing party to help Walker's foes and trapped the man of destiny. He concluded not to attempt a hopeless resistance, because he believed that his life would be safe with Englishmen. Their country had filed no charges warranting the death penalty. However, Salmon basely turned him over to the Honduran authorities. He was court-martialed and shot on September 12, 1860.

William Walker personified a doctrine then popular in the United States, North and South, that of "manifest destiny" to rule the continent to the Isthmus of Panama. He championed his own section's destiny to do this, but his mental reservation was not understood by his

imitators during the next three-quarters of a century. He came to be esteemed as having been a sort of forerunner of "dollar diplomacy." In Spanish America, he was a symbol of Saxon aggression.

From his own point of view, it was tragic that he should have gone to Honduras. A few months longer, and he would have been cast for a leading role in an infinitely greater drama. He would, without doubt, have been commissioned a General in the Army of the Southern Confederacy.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

### THE WAR OF SECESSION

WAR was waged for four years by the eleven commonwealths of Dixie, in an attempt to establish their right under the Constitution to secede from the Federal Union. They came close to success. Opinions differ as to why they precipitated the rupture in 1861, and why the North saw fit to coerce them by force of arms. Few modern historians believe that Negro slavery was the decisive issue. Grave injustices had made the agrarian South the economic vassal of the industrial North. The tariff imposed burdens upon a people that sold its staple product, cotton, in Europe and needed to buy cheap manufactured goods in the market from which it derived its revenue, but was prevented from doing so by customs duties fixed in Washington for the protection of Northern factories. The last-named prospered on their high price-scale, and it was not in the Yankee nature to allow the considerable block of Southern customers to depart in peace. This would appear to have been the chief cause of war. There are authorities who prefer other theories not quite so realistic.

The writer feels strongly that the secession movement would have come to a head sooner or later for a primary reason, to which issues merely contributed. The South had developed into a separate country. Its way of life from the start had diverged, with social and emotional results difficult to analyze, but no more unusual in relation to the North than the divergence of two Iberian peoples like Spain and Portugal, or two Scandinavian peoples like Norway and Sweden.

The Constitution of the Confederate States of America, adopted at Montgomery in February, 1861, reiterated that the slave trade was abolished forever. Human bondage was retained, but liberal Southerners believed, rationally, that the institution was on its way out, there and in every other civilized country. General Robert E. Lee had voluntarily freed his slaves. President Jefferson Davis leaned backward in treating his Negroes justly, kindly, and giving them opportunities to earn money with which they could buy their liberty. Another feature of the new Constitution was the prohibition of all duties for the protection of industry. This was hardly likely to have stood the test of time. But it is meaningful, as indicating how different from the North

the South regarded itself as being. Its irrepressible impulse was to turn that feeling into a political reality.

Fort Sumter, at the entrance of Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, was reduced on April 13 by General Beauregard, the North having persisted in maintaining a garrison there, and the war was on. Its reverberations were promptly felt throughout the Caribbean region, where it was understood the outcome would affect the future of various countries, not to mention the canal projects.

The Confederacy had no navy, but by the second week of May it was licensing privateers, which ranged in size from the thirty-ton, one-gun schooner *Triton* to the 1,644-ton steamer *Phenix*, mounting seven guns, and as powerful as the average cruiser of the day. These craft kept close to the North American coast and plagued shipping until the North clamped a blockade, that spring and early summer, upon the Southern seaboard from Hampton Roads to the mouth of the Rio Grande. This never was made so tight that no vessels could slip through, but it bottled up the privateers. Few of the latter had either the speed or the armament to cope with warships. Their reason for



The Caribbean in the Civil War

being, in any event, had been to bring their captures to Confederate ports, where the cargoes were sold for their own benefit, less five per cent paid into the public treasury.

New methods were developed. Blockade-runners, mostly foreigners, took chances on slipping their boats through the Yankee naval patrols into Charleston, Savannah, Wilmington and other points on the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The Confederate Government, as part of its plan for founding a navy, equipped commerce raiders, commissioned as national vessels and commanded by regular officers. The raiders became an effective factor ahead of the blockade-runners.

On June 30, Captain Raphael Semmes evaded several warcraft that were guarding the mouths of the Mississippi and entered the Gulf in the *Sumter*, a converted passenger liner of five hundred tons, operating under both steam and sail, and heavily armed. He made for the Cuban coast, where in four days he captured eight Northern merchantmen, only one of which he burned. He interned the rest at the port of Cienfuegos, to test the South's rights under the neutrality proclamations of the European powers. The intention was to sell the prizes at the end of the war, a preferable course to destroying them.

Semmes proceeded to the Spanish Main, Trinidad, the sea lanes off Brazil, back to the Lesser Antilles, and then across the Atlantic to Gibraltar. He had seized ten more ships, and having learned that those he had left at Cienfuegos would be surrendered to the Yankees, he inaugurated the practice of burning his captures whenever their cargoes were not owned by neutrals. The *Sumter* had been a makeshift. She reached Gibraltar in a sinking condition, was abandoned there and sold.

The Confederate Government had ordered several cruisers from English builders. The first of these to be delivered were the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, which sailed from Liverpool in the summer of 1862, ostensibly as merchantmen on trial runs. Commissioned and armed at sea off the Azores, with Semmes as commander, the *Alabama*, one thousand tons, became the most celebrated raider in history. The *Florida*, under Commander John N. Maffitt, also performed well.

Semmes began by devastating a whaling fleet in the North Atlantic, then appeared in the chief traffic lane between New York and Europe, where he took eleven rich prizes. He dropped down to the Caribbean in November and made a sweep of enemy shipping from Martinique to the Gulf of Mexico. The consternation caused by his activities almost passes belief. Insurance rates on Yankee vessels soared to prohibitive figures. There was a rush to change to British registry, and dummy

ownership of cargoes was established whenever possible. The carrying trade of the United States has never fully recovered from the blows then dealt to it.

In January, 1863, Semmes enticed the U. S. S. *Hatteras* from her station in a blockading squadron off Galveston, Texas, and sank her in thirteen minutes in a night engagement. He landed his prisoners at Kingston, Jamaica, since he was unable to reach a Confederate port with them, and prolonged his visit for five days. Jamaica gave him a reception that amounted to hero worship. It typified the pro-Southern sentiment which prevailed in the English and French West Indian colonies. The following opinion was expressed in another of the writer's books, and he sees no reason for altering it:

"What really mattered, as between Jamaica and the Confederacy, was the unalterable fact that they were two English-speaking units in the same section of the Western World, with identical social and material problems. The Jamaica of 1863 dreaded the commercial system of the North, which might dominate the continent unless it was weakened by a military defeat. She felt she could live happily beside a new republic with an economy similar to her own. It was natural that such considerations should be mirrored in the terms of emotion."

The business of blockade-running, meanwhile, had grown to enormous proportions. Nassau, in the Bahamas, was the center of operations, with Bermuda and St. Thomas ranking next. A small amount of illicit trading, comparatively, was done from Havana and Kingston, Jamaica. The flow overland from Mexico could not be hampered by the Northerners, but it failed of large importance until the last year of the war, when a mushroom port called Bagdad sprang up at the mouth of the Rio Grande, on the Mexican shore. Bagdad, a safer goal than tormented Charleston and Wilmington, received immense supplies that were transshipped through Matamoros and Brownsville, Texas.

The profits reaped by Nassau were perhaps the greatest in the annals of Caribbean ports, size and temporary prominence considered, since the days of the buccaneers' Port Royal. Every kind of article needed by Dixie, from munitions and medicines to cosmetics and the Paris modes, was handled by swarms of adventurers who could afford to lose two ships if one got through, and who generally did much better than that. Four hundred separate vessels cleared from Nassau for the Confederate States in the last two years of the war; one of them made eighteen round trips before she was caught. Payment was often ac-

cepted in cotton, which could be sold in Europe for ten times its original knock-down price. Yet the volume of trade was far below the demand. The blockade, as much as any other agency, doomed the Confederacy.

When Semmes left Jamaica, he burned a vessel near Hispaniola, then stood into the Atlantic and south to the Brazilian coast, where he did huge damage to shipping. He was not seen again in the Caribbean. But one cannot dismiss this legendary captain without mentioning that he cruised as far as the East Indian Archipelago, and although the *Alabama* had no home port he kept her in action for two years and ran her tally of prizes to sixty-nine ships. He docked at Cherbourg, France, in June, 1864, for repairs. Before he learned whether these would be permitted, the Northern cruiser, *Kearsarge*, stationed herself off the mole to keep him a prisoner. Semmes voluntarily went out and fought a duel to the death with an opponent who, unknown to him, had chain armor bolted to her sides and concealed by one-inch deal boards. The *Alabama* was sunk. Semmes escaped, and on his return to the South was promoted an admiral. He surrendered with the last Confederate army below Richmond.

The War of Secession had ominous secondary results in Mexico. Benito Juárez, a full-blooded Indian, one of the noblest patriots in the history of his country, had become President in 1858. Three years later, he suspended payment of interest on external debt, without having negotiated with England, France and Spain, the chief creditors. He had been stung to this action by exorbitant demands from abroad. But his course was undiplomatic. Taking advantage of the war in the United States, the Powers landed a punitive force at Vera Cruz, consisting of six thousand Spaniards, three thousand Frenchmen and seven hundred British marines.

Napoleon III had decided to install the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, as hereditary ruler of Mexico, and to what extent his allies connived with Napoleon has never been clear. The English and Spanish finally grew disgusted and evacuated their soldiers in April, 1862. The French General then seized the city of Orizaba. He was joined by Mexicans of the faction which had supported the ambitions of Iturbide and had never ceased to desire an Emperor. There was heavy fighting in front of Puebla, where the invaders were checked. They occupied a number of mountain strongholds and awaited fresh troops from Europe.

Bazaine's army of thirty thousand men, formidably equipped, left no doubt about the scope of the Bonapartist design. The New World was

shocked. A flagrant defiance of the Monroe Doctrine appeared likely to succeed, because the Washington Government was too preoccupied to make its objections count. The French laid siege to Puebla, reduced it in May, 1863, and marched on to Mexico City. Juárez fled before them, but with a doggedness for which his people have glorified him, he merely transferred his capital and continued to transfer it, as the French advanced, until he was functioning from the town on the Rio Grande opposite El Paso, Texas, which has been renamed in his honor, Ciudad Juárez. At no time, during four years of struggle against seemingly inevitable disaster, would the stoical little Indian consent to abandon the symbols of constitutional government.

In the autumn of 1863, a delegation of Mexican notables subservient to the French waited on Maximilian in Europe and offered him the throne. He replied that he could not accept it unless approved by a free vote of the whole nation. It was easy to stage a referendum which furnished "almost unanimous" support for the foreign prince. Maximilian and his beautiful consort, Carlotta of Belgium, entered Mexico City in May, 1864, a little late to benefit by the situation in the United States, where the Confederacy was losing. The imported Emperor was well meaning. He did not truckle to the reactionaries, but appointed many liberals to important posts, fostered education, tried to relieve the lot of the peons and refused to restore Church property which had been confiscated by previous regimes. It proved impossible, however, for him to persuade the masses of his sincerity. Armed opposition was never stamped out, though it was reduced at times to guerilla bands. The young Porfirio Diaz became known as a republican commander.

Generals Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston capitulated in April, 1865, and the War of Secession ended. The South's sense of nationality had been crystallized by battle. It was the Confederacy that fell, a creaking structure debilitated by its concessions to "State's Rights" and lacking material resources. The North was no sooner victorious than it began to mass troops on the border between Texas and Mexico. Napoleon III was notified that if he continued to support Maximilian, the situation might lead to hostilities. There were exchanges of notes, and in the end the French Emperor deserted his protégé. The last European soldiers left Mexico in March, 1867.

Maximilian had the chance to abdicate, but was persuaded by local advisers not to do so. The tide of revolution rose about him with amazing rapidity. He was besieged in Querétaro, taken prisoner in May and executed by a firing squad, along with the Mexican Generals, Miramón and Mejía, of his staff. Porfirio Diaz immediately occupied the capital,



and postponing his own ambitions he reinstated President Juárez in July. The trappings of empire passed from the Mexican scene, but not the lust for absolutism on the part of its strong men.

(If the events of ~~this~~ stormy period had turned out differently, Caribbean history would have been profoundly modified. Such an assertion is a truism, applicable to many periods. Its special significance in connection with this one is due to the survival of the United States as a power overwhelmingly stronger than its neighbors, and to the effect that this had upon the plans for an interoceanic canal.)

An independent South would have been a Caribbean state, while the North would have been thrust from direct contact with the Sea and doubtless would have ceased to have great influence there. Mexico might or might not have remained an empire, but she would hardly have been able to shake off the tutelage of France. There would have been considerable jockeying for position in the Caribbean by nations of fairly even strength. The competition for canal rights would have been keen.

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty held the United States and England in a partnership which probably would have survived. Acting together, these two nations would have dug at Panama, maybe at the Nicaragua depression, too, so as to forestall rivals in either section. France and the Confederate States indubitably would have hurried to take joint action at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, a perfectly practicable route, 125 miles long, with an extreme elevation of 735 feet. The Juárez Government in Mexico, prior to the War of Secession, had ceded "perpetual unlimited transit" across Tehuantepec, in exchange for \$4,000,000. The treaty was not ratified by the United States Senate, but Maximilian would have transferred the privilege to Dixie, always regarded by him as an ally.

As things turned out, Yankee policies dominated the region. The question of a canal was indefinitely postponed.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

### FERMENT IN THE ISLANDS

THOMAS JEFFERSON ruminated aloud and publicly in 1807, to the effect that if the United States should go to war with Spain, Cuba might take the opportunity to join the Union. Not long afterward, he stated that both Cuba and Florida would have to be acquired for the sake of national security. In 1823, after he had been out of the presidency for many years, he wrote, "It is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that annexation of Cuba to our federal republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union itself." Other statesmen of the period shared his belief. Many, if not most, of the early Cuban patriots were of the same opinion, less because they were eager to be assimilated than because they could see no other solution. They, along with the Puerto Ricans, shrank from the ultimate test. They could not envisage an island being successful against Spain, and they were afraid of their own slaves. They made overtures to the United States, but, Jefferson notwithstanding, the great republic was coy about meeting them halfway.

In 1847, a Venezuelan named Narciso López who had risen to high rank in the Spanish Army, retired and settled in Cuba, became impassioned over the abuses of colonial rule. He framed a conspiracy, but was emphatic in telling his supporters that the only rational end would be to duplicate the tactics of Texas. His plans leaked out, and he fled to the mainland. He was well received by American politicians, especially by Southerners who welcomed the idea of Cuba as a new slave state.

Propaganda, with López as chief exhibit, proved so successful that in 1848, year of the war with Mexico, President Polk's Government made Spain a formal offer of purchase. The heated answer was, that sooner than transfer Cuba to any other power, Spaniards "would rather see it sunk in the ocean." Three separate military expeditions were then prepared by López, with a minimum of interference from United States authorities and open help from prominent Southerners, including Governor John A. Quitman of Mississippi. The first two were abortive. The third, organized in New Orleans, consisted of 450 admirably equipped men. The command was actually offered to Jefferson Davis, and upon his refusal to Robert E. Lee, who waved it aside. Colonels Robert Wheat and John Crittenden, the latter at the head of his own unit of 150 Kentuckians, became co-equal deputies under López.

This force landed on August 12, 1851, at Bahia Honda, fifty miles west of Havana. It failed dismally to stimulate a popular revolt, and following two engagements it was overwhelmed. The Spaniards shot Crittenden and about fifty of the American survivors. Wheat escaped. Narciso López was garroted publicly in Havana.

Cuba had been misunderstood by her would-be savior. She was no more anxious than other Hispanic colonies had been to bleed for any flag but her own. The island was enjoying a period of great prosperity, her sugar trade having boomed and her cigars won recognition as the best in the world. Yet the spirit of nationalism began to make itself felt among the class that was benefiting under Spanish rule, and the very difficulties which had seemed insuperable to the previous generation were now calmly discounted. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a well-born landowner of Santiago province, felt reproved by the misguided gallantry of López and interpreted the lesson with selfless logic. Cuba's slave population was then slightly in excess of fifty per cent of the whole. Céspedes saw that the Negroes would have to be included in the revolution, and that it would not make sense to ask them to fight unless they were first given their liberty.

The planter patriot moved slowly. He found that men of his class throughout the eastern end of the island felt as he did and were willing to make sacrifices. A skeleton organization was built, the first that had a free Cuba as its objective. It commenced by asking for self-government, cessation of the exclusion of Cubans from public office, the rights of assembly and an unfettered press. The demands were treated with contempt by a court that had learned nothing from the loss of satrapies in two continents. Céspedes suffered imprisonment for a year for peacefully advocating reform. It was clear that nothing could be changed without a resort to arms, and that the first attempt would be a forlorn hope.

On October 9, 1868, Céspedes freed his slaves, then appeared at the main entrance of his sugar plantation and pledged the 147 men who had assembled to "Independence or Death" for the country. This is known as the Cry of Yara, named for the near-by village which had been Jaxa in the Arawâk tongue, scene of the death by burning of Hatuey, the cacique, at the hands of the Spanish conqueror, Velasquez. The gesture by Céspedes was one of the most dramatic and noble in Caribbean history. He demanded that his fellow aristocrats free their slaves, which they did in most cases. In a few months, he had 26,000 followers. Cuba's Negroes furnished an impressive quota of fervid patriots.

The capital was established at Bayamo and Céspedes elected Provi-

sional President at the age of forty-nine. Military leaders developed rapidly, the outstanding figures being Máximo Gómez, a native of the Dominican Republic; Agramonte and Calixto García, white Cubans; and the Maceo brothers, mulattoes. They gained experience in a school cruel beyond belief, a hell of reprisals. This first revolt lasted for a decade and was called the Ten Years' War. The operations never were carried west of the center of the island. In the east, the Spaniards decreed that every male found away from his home would be shot, and that every house which did not fly a white flag or was unoccupied would be burned. The insurrectos retorted with guerilla tactics, machete charges on horseback such as European troops had never conceived and which outdid the use of the lance; the torch for the dwellings, sugar-mills and crops of all Spanish sympathizers. But the Cubans observed the rules of war where women and children were concerned. The Spaniards did not.

Hopes of foreign intervention were entertained. The United States, the most likely friend, was recovering from her own War of Secession and refused even to recognize the Cubans as belligerents. Late in the struggle, on October 31, 1873, the *Virginius*, a blockade-runner of munitions and American volunteers, commanded by the ex-Confederate captain, Joseph Fry, was captured off Jamaica by the Spaniards. She was taken to Santiago-de-Cuba, where after a farcical trial Fry and fifty-two others were shot. This incident almost caused the United States to declare war on Spain. President Grant preferred to let it blow over.

Céspedes was killed in a raid on the village where he was a fugitive, in 1873. Two years later, General Máximo Gómez met with serious reverses. The revolution was dying. On February 10, 1878, the Pact of Zanjón was signed and the Cubans laid down their arms without undue penalties being exacted. They had lost 40,000 men, the Spaniards 140,000. The abolition of slavery can be ascribed in part to the heroic drama that had been staged. The Spaniards proclaimed the reform in 1880 and carried it into full effect in 1886.

Puerto Rico, the colony that drowsed through the centuries, the only Caribbean island where the Negro element was negligible, responded faintly to the example of Cuba. There was one uprising in the town of Lares, which the Spaniards crushed easily. As vengeance for an independence proclamation, all men found with arms in their hands were put to death. The old families had not joined, and in 1872 Madrid provided that sixteen deputies and four senators should be elected from Puerto Rico to the two houses of the Cortes. The ballots were so

manipulated that none but conservatives could be chosen. The abuses of local government persisted.

When Spanish Hispaniola cast off Haitian rule in 1844 and became the Dominican Republic, a century of internecine war, of strange vacillation as to ultimate sovereignty and of social chaos began about the bones of Columbus. In writing of this country, the word "only" imposes itself. It is the only mulatto state and jealously guards the anomaly of a half-blood ruling caste, being contemptuous of blacks and suspicious of whites. It is the only former Spanish possession which sought reannexation, and which floundered into a long interlude of failure to maintain even the semblance of a government. Yet paradoxically its nationalism has been marked by a unique ardor.

The first President was Pedro Santana, an illiterate giant more than half Negro, whose best qualities were military. He stamped out the revolts that flared against him, and then in 1849 performed a notable exploit in routing a large army from Haiti led by the self-styled Emperor Faustin I, better known as Soulouque. Santana had a rival, the almost white Buenaventura Báez, a man of broader talents. These two alternated in the presidency for twenty years, matching each other's deeds of bravery and producing similar weird panaceas out of their hats. In 1854, Báez also repelled an invasion by Soulouque, who was said to have received assurances from his most trusted voodoo *papaloi* that on that occasion he could not be beaten.

Furious at his people's instability under the simulacrum of constitutional rule which he was giving them, Santana negotiated with the oppressor of days gone by, had his country readmitted into the Spanish realm as a vassal, in 1861, and induced the Dominicans to see the change, briefly, as a glamorous one. This was his most remarkable achievement. He was appointed Captain-General. But the army of occupation made itself thoroughly obnoxious, and by 1863 there was a popular explosion grandiloquently known as the "War of the Restoration." The Spanish Crown appeared to be disinterested in coping with it. Yellow fever decimated the troops, and the survivors were forced back to the city of Santo Domingo, where they stood on the defensive. The Cortes scuttled the colony by legal enactment in May, 1865, and Spain broke her record in America by getting out peacefully.

Santana passed for good. Báez returned to the presidency, but he could not solve the problems caused by the recent phantasmagoria. He asked the United States, four years later, to annex the republic. President Grant had refused to help the Cuban revolutionists with moral support, but he liked the prospect of acquiring tropical territory so

simply. The episode is one of the dark mysteries in American Caribbean relations. Grant and Báez between them did the utmost to negotiate the deal. At the Washington end, a group of rich speculators are believed to have influenced the President. A treaty was prepared by the State Department in 1869 and tentatively signed by both parties. Báez submitted it to a plebiscite in February, 1870, obtained some 16,000 favorable votes and himself added eleven "Noes," because he thought that would make the record look more natural. But the United States Senate rejected the treaty, and Báez soon followed Santana into retirement, for a not dissimilar reason. The next Dominican leader of importance was the mulatto Ulises Heureux, who kept himself in power for seventeen years by the most despotic methods.

The period under review was marked by an armed disturbance in Jamaica, which although no more than a riot parochial in scope and naïvely led, was fated to have far-reaching political consequences. A light-colored man of means named George William Gordon, eloquent but visionary, had obtained a seat in the House of Assembly. He had long denounced English misrule, but there is nothing to show that he ever contemplated a rebellion. In October, 1865, a few hundred Negroes armed with machetes, pikes and sticks, gathered more or less spontaneously in the hills and marched on the town of Morant Bay, where a governmental board was sitting. A revivalist lay preacher was at their head. Their program was a vague demand for "justice for their color," inspired by unemployment and the landless condition of most of the ex-slaves. They rushed a village police station on the way and took the muskets and bayonets they found there.

At Morant Bay, the mob collected in front of the court house. The custos, or chief local magistrate, came out on the steps and read the Riot Act, supported by a squad of militia. Stones and bottles were thrown from the crowd. The militia fired a volley. The Negroes thereupon stormed the court house and killed eighteen white men, including the custos. Several other whites were butchered during the course of the day. It was an ugly business, but it was not a rebellion. The rioters milled about aimlessly, without a further objective.

English troops were poured into Morant Bay, and the surrounding countryside was turned into a shambles. As reprisals, nearly 100 colored men were hanged or shot without trial, 354 executed after court-martial, 600 flogged, and about 1,000 cottages were burned. Gordon was arrested in Kingston, where he had been throughout the trouble, tried for treason and convicted on the ground that his previous utterances had served as an incitement to bloodshed. He was hanged.

The Governor, Edward John Eyre, convened the Assembly before quiet had been restored and asked it to abolish itself. The planters and merchants were panic-stricken, mainly because the war in the United States had ended that year with the defeat of the South. They believed, or said they believed, that a reign of terror by liberated slaves would soon break out in North America and that the resultant anarchy would spread to the West Indian islands. They wanted police protection by England. For these reasons, the Assembly obligingly put an end to its own existence, after functioning for two hundred years. Jamaica got Crown Colony government in exchange.

England at once brought pressure to bear upon her other tropical possessions in the New World, excepting Barbados, the Bahamas and Bermuda. Those with popular legislatures underwent the metamorphosis which had been so adroitly accomplished in Jamaica. The system tried out in Trinidad since its acquisition from Spain was applied, with variations, to all of them.

Crown Colony government means rule by the Colonial Office in London through the agency of a Governor and his heads of departments, whom it selects. Such appointees are almost invariably Englishmen. A local legislature is permitted to debate and vote upon matters laid before it, but it may not initiate a measure. Its membership is partly elective, the rest of the House being made up of a clear majority of officials and persons nominated by the Governor. The latter acts as Speaker, and he has both an original and a casting vote. He may declare any question to be one of "paramount importance" and promulgate a law that has been rejected by the legislature, his action being then subject to review only by the Colonial Office.

The arbitrary nature of the system has never been denied by Britain. Her statesmen have said, time and again, that self-government would be granted to the separate units, "when they are fit for it." It was a foregone conclusion that the ancient Caribbean colonies would make an issue of the right to decide their own "fitness," as soon as the hysteria suffered by the generation of the 1860's and 1870's had worn off.

The present generation is the first, however, to begin to understand clearly that the events of the past hundred years were rehearsals for the drama of self-determination. The drift might have been halted if the New World units had been federated in a dominion, or given representation in the Imperial Parliament. Nothing of the sort was even contemplated, so they were forced to think of themselves as New World countries, neither more nor less.

## CHAPTER FORTY

### THE FRENCH AT PANAMA

THE Suez Canal, a hundred miles long through desert sands, having been opened to profitable traffic in 1879, the French engineer who had been the soul of the project turned his attention to Panama. His name was Ferdinand de Lesseps, and he was seventy-four years old. Expert opinion at the time favored the Nicaragua route to the Pacific, but Anglo-American interests were in control there. The existing lien on Panama mattered less. The Republic of Colombia controlled the Isthmus, and in 1878 it had granted a concession for the construction of a canal to Bonaparte Wyse, an obscure French lieutenant. De Lesseps formed a company, which bought out Wyse for \$2,000,000 and proceeded with a rush to sell stock to the public. These maneuvers were distasteful to the United States Government. President Hayes declared, "The policy of this country is a canal under American control." Yet nothing was done by Washington to block the scheme.

Perhaps the feeling was that the French might as well be allowed to hang themselves. Their approach to the task assuredly was not sound. Panama offered far greater engineering and climatic difficulties than Suez. It was proposed to dig a sea-level ditch through mountains, forests and swamps, where yellow fever and malaria were age-old plagues. A firm, militarized state control was needed, to maintain efficiency. The de Lesseps method was that of the commercial promoter, certain to result in waste and a loose discipline.

High-powered salesmanship, re-enforced by rose-tinted falsehoods published in the Company's official organ, *Le Bulletin*, extracted hundreds of millions of francs from the French public, who had forgotten the Mississippi Bubble of 160 years before. The Panama Railroad, no longer a paying proposition because of the completion of the Union Pacific across the United States, was bought for the absurd sum of \$25,000,000. Mechanical equipment and supplies of every sort were sent out from Europe without regard to cost, since the insiders collected dishonest commissions.

Late in 1879, de Lesseps, by courtesy a viscount, though republican France had abolished titles, landed on the Isthmus, accompanied by his wife and several children. He stayed for less than a week, during which



the canal was started with ceremonial fanfare. His daughter, Ferdinande, turned the first sod with a pickaxe at the point, according to *Le Bulletin*, "which will mark the entrance of the Canal on the side of the Pacific Ocean." There was a reception, or a banquet, every day. Then de Lesseps turned over the job to several hundred young engineers and departed on a long tour of the United States and France. He smoothed away political objections in the first country and lent his reputation won at Suez to shameless stock-jobbery in the second.

Progress was made, notably after the arrival in 1883 of M. Dingler as chief engineer. Some French authorities insist that slightly more than half the basic obstacles were overcome. But the chances were hopelessly against success. Arthur Bullard writes, in his informative book, *Panama*:

"There is an immense pathos in the idea of these men working so sincerely, in the midst of this fever-ridden jungle, for a gang of wildcat promoters in Paris. For, besides the treachery which threatened them from home, they were in their work face to face with overwhelming odds.

"First of all, as it was not a Government undertaking, they had to let out the excavation to contractors. The conditions of the work were so unprecedented that for years they could only guess at the costs, and the terms of the contracts were haphazard. The private contractors took out the soft earth at the stipulated price per cubic yard, and then threw up their hands and went through bankruptcy in the face of the more difficult excavation. The Company was paying exorbitant prices for the easiest work, and not making any progress at all in the more formidable sections of the canal. It lost money, or was probably intentionally cheated, by almost all the contractors. Two glowing exceptions were the contracts let to an American named Slaven for dredging at the Atlantic entrance, and to the French company organized by M. Bunau-Varilla for dry excavation in Culebra Cut. The work accomplished by these two firms was remarkable."

Labor was hard to get and unreliable. The people of the country had no liking for sustained effort with pick and shovel. Chinese were imported, but their poor physique and the cost of bringing them thousands of miles across the Pacific put a damper on the scheme. Negroes drifted down of their own accord from the British and French West Indies; they proved definitely the type of workman best suited to the conditions, a fact which the United States took into account later on.

The rights of Panamanian labor, nevertheless, became one of the

chief sources of local graft. The Government at Bogotá had never given the matter a thought before. The most was now made of compensation claims for injuries, real and imaginary, and if there was litigation on this score the Company invariably lost. Judges who had not been "fixed" imposed heavy fines, if laggards on the job were discharged without notice. But the politicians, like modern gangsters, collected blackmail by selling the French "protection" against such annoyances.

Disease was immeasurably the greatest problem with which the French had to cope. Panama had long been known as a deathtrap for whites, unless native born. It turned out that the Chinese were almost equally susceptible to the maladies of the American Tropics, and that Negroes from healthy mountainous islands were by no means immune on the Isthmus. Malaria killed more persons than yellow fever, but as practically every newcomer caught malaria and the great majority recovered, it did not seem so terrible. The toll of Yellow Jack was often two out of three of those stricken. A larger percentage could be saved by good nursing, but there was little of that for the French in Panama.

Dreadful things happened. Dingler commenced the building of a fine house overlooking the sea, and sent for his wife and three children. It was never occupied, for as the family waited for it to be ready the fever took them all. Two engineers, MM. Petit and Sordoillet, arrived together from Paris to assume the posts of division chiefs. Fifteen days afterward, they were buried side by side. Monkey Hill near Colon became the most thickly populated cemetery on the Caribbean. Coffins were placed one above the other, separated by a few inches of earth, while a community pit was dug daily to receive the coffinless *hoi polloi*. Under such conditions, men grew callous about death.

The story is told of a casual visitor to the Isthmus, who found the hotels in Colon crowded to capacity. He was finally offered a cheap room, which he engaged sight unseen. The clerk instructed him how to get there, since there was no boy handy to show him the way. He did not like the appearance of the unmade bed, and after much shouting he managed to get the ear of a Negro maid. She glanced about and shrugged. The fact was, she drawled, the last tenant had died there that morning, and she had not had time to change the sheets.

"Died—this morning!" the visitor gasped, green to the lips. "What of?"

"Just one of the fevers of the country," the maid answered. "Yellow fever, no doubt, for he went fast."

The other fled back to the boat which had brought him to Colon,

was relieved to learn that she would sail in an hour, and stayed on her.

"Subtle and swift, the mysterious disease [yellow fever] seems to defy all observation, to laugh at all remedies," declared Philippe Bunau-Varilla, innocent of the ways of the *Stegomyia* mosquito. "The victim whom it has touched is in the hands of luck. The most erudite and devoted physicians must content themselves with administering, not remedies which will check the progress of the malady, but simple palliatives, the effects of which are more moral than real."

The annual death rate from all causes among the canal employees hovered around 150 per thousand. In September, 1885, it established a record of 176.97 per thousand.

De Lesseps returned to the Isthmus in 1886, hoping to garner facts that would encourage the investors. His visit was very short. During the whole course of the work, he was present for less than two months. In France, matters were going to the dogs. A billion or so francs had been raised from the public. The price of shares had been forced down periodically, by means of pessimistic rumors, which enabled the stock-market bears to profit. Then a fantastic puffery had sent the shares skyrocketing, and the insiders had unloaded. Many high officials had become involved in the scandal. The cry of, "Panama! Panama!" was beginning to be heard in the Chamber of Deputies. It was soon to drive cabinets from office.

There was nothing but bad news in the report of de Lesseps to his associates. He had promised to finish the canal in six years. The deadline had been passed and there were no prospects of earning revenue for a decade, or indeed of ever joining the oceans at the rate the work was going. In 1888 the bubble burst. The Company went into bankruptcy.

The plans had called for a ditch dug down to twenty-seven and a half feet below sea level, seventy-two feet wide at the bottom and ninety feet at the waterline. Its length was to have been about forty-nine miles. In the ninth year, there existed a fourteen-mile channel from the Caribbean to beyond Gatún. What with the cut at Culebra and other works, less than twenty-five per cent of the necessary excavation had been accomplished. Money had been spent wastefully in Panama, but this was offset by the wholesale robbery committed by the Parisian directors. It is doubtful if ten per cent of the total funds ever reached the Isthmus.

A new company was formed under Government supervision. It maintained a skeleton force on the canal, in order to hold the franchise. A number of the promoters—not the most guilty ones, be it said—were

brought to trial. De Lesseps received a sentence of five years' imprisonment, but was not compelled to serve it. He died in a lunatic asylum, his spirit broken by the disgrace.

Tracy Robinson, an old resident of the Isthmus, who observed the French venture from start to finish, knew de Lesseps personally, and witnessed the subsequent triumph of American enterprise, felt strongly that the engineer of Suez "was not sordid, not the imposter his enemies declare him to have been." Robinson declared that de Lesseps believed he could live up to his contract, but that he did not have the administrative abilities required for so difficult a work; that he was too old, too eager for fresh laurels, too easily imposed upon by men whose first aim was plunder, too ill a judge of character to fill with success a place of such great responsibility.

Be that as it may, the canal project was the last attempt on a large scale by Frenchmen in the New World. It was supposed to be a purely commercial undertaking, having no object but the opening of a route to the Pacific, for the use of which all comers would be charged a uniform toll. As was the case with the Suez Canal, international politics could not have been kept out of it. The United States grudgingly consented to allow the de Lesseps concern to do the physical labor and own the plant. That she would have demanded special rights there for the passage of battleships, with complete control in time of war, is not to be doubted. If the French had refused, it might have become a *casus belli*, involving many nations.

The cards were stacked differently. Ferdinand de Lesseps succeeded only in re-establishing Panama for good and all as the nerve-center of the Caribbean region.

## CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

### CUBA LIBRE

THE Ten Years' War in Cuba had been ended by what the Spaniards called a pact instead of a peace. The patriots never regarded it as having been more than a truce. They had three veteran military chiefs of outstanding ability, awaiting the call to return from exile. Máximo Gómez, the tenacious old Dominican, had adopted the Cuban cause with a passion he somehow could not feel for the problems of his own country. Antonio Maceo, the mulatto, had earned in battle the sobriquet of the "Centaur" and the warm admiration of both races whose blood he shared. Calixto García brooded, prematurely aged, an odd-looking scar on his forehead between the eyes; to escape capture after his last fight, he had discharged a rifle into his mouth, and by one chance in a million the bullet had glanced on a bone and emerged without killing him.

But there was a new leader, of a very different type, a poet, journalist and scholar, José Julián Martí, who became the soul of the revolutionary effort and without whom a free Cuba might not have been created in that generation. Martí ranks next to Bolívar for the purity of his motives, his unshakable devotion and the poignancy of his words. He did not have the Venezuelan's universal genius, for he lacked the Napoleonic touch in war and statecraft. It is significant that Spanish Americans call him the Apostle, while Bolívar is the Liberator. Some of Martí's sayings are unforgettable. Yet he would have scorned to make phrases for their own sake. The things he felt deeply found expression in extraordinary language:

"To many generations of slaves must succeed one generation of martyrs." . . . "He is a criminal who promotes an evitable war, and he, also, who avoids an inevitable war." . . . "What I must say before my voice is silenced and my heart ceases to beat in this world, is that my country has all the virtues necessary for the conquest and maintenance of her liberty."

Martí was the son of a Spanish sergeant of rural guards and a Cuban mother. The paternal ancestry seemed meaningless to him. He loved the land of his birth. Amazingly precocious, he was speaking and writing against tyranny as a schoolboy. In the first year of the Ten Years'

War, aged fifteen, he was arrested for the sentiments expressed in a private letter. Some accounts say that a poem he had published carried even more weight. He was tried for sedition and sentenced to six years' hard labor. He worked in fetters and under the lash for six months in a stone quarry. Friends got him commutation to exile, and he spent four years in Spain, graduating at the University of Saragossa. He then roamed through Spanish American countries, returned to Cuba after the Pact of Zanjón, and within a year was again expelled.

During his second exile, which lasted fifteen years and was passed mostly in the United States, Martí organized a new revolt against Spain. He became famous as a journalist, writing in Spanish for newspapers in both Americas and often contributing to the New York press. For a short time he was the Argentinian consul in New York. But the work to which he gave his best energy and every cent he could spare was the Cuban campaign, conceived in the dual terms of propaganda and arming for war. Large numbers of his countrymen worked in the cigar factories of Key West and Tampa, Florida. Martí went among them and founded a *junta*. He galvanized an old group in New York, staffed it with brilliant refugees who were later to hold the highest offices in the Patria. He visited all the republics on the Caribbean, as well as Jamaica, preached to the Cubans living in what they had accepted as hopeless banishment, and aroused governmental sympathy in some quarters.

The challenge, "*Cuba Libre!*" became known to the world, as it could not have been without Martí. He made the people of the United States conscious once more of the oppressed island at her southern doorstep. This was a vital contribution, as events proved, second only to his heroic death.

At the end of 1894, an expedition consisting of three ships was prepared in America. The vessels were seized on orders from Washington, the Cleveland Administration being touchy on the subject of neutrality. This was a hard blow, but Martí went ahead with his plans as if nothing had happened. He and the Generals were in full agreement. On February 24, 1895, provincial forces raised the flag at Baire in the east of Cuba. Maceo joined them, and other leaders marched with contingents whose eagerness they held in check. All were awaiting the arrival of the Apostle and Máximo Gómez from the Dominican Republic.

Cheap gibes had been made at Martí, that he was asking his compatriots to die while he sat in an easy chair in New York. He weighed these and concluded that they were justified. He had no experience as a soldier, but neither had many of the thousands who were volunteering.

Over the protests of his associates on the central committee, he resolved to take part in the first campaign, though it was understood that he would leave Cuba after he had smelled powder and "proved his bravery." As if that self-sacrificing spirit had ever needed to put physical courage on display! It was a gesture of supreme humility, coming from him.

On a stormy night, a small boat which had last sailed from a point in Haiti grounded on a beach near Cape Maisi. Martí stepped out, followed by the lean figure of Gómez, then seventy-two years old. Four officers accompanied them. They plunged into the interior, and in a few days an army had rallied around them. The news was relayed from all quarters that Gómez was unanimously accepted as commander-in-chief. He moved his forces cautiously in the direction of Santiago-de-Cuba, until on May 19 the advance guard ran into an ambush at Dos Rios. Martí, riding a white horse, had insisted upon having a post of danger. Rifles blazed from the underbrush, and he was among the first to fall. The Spaniards captured his body.

When they realized whom they had killed, they carried the remains triumphantly to Santiago and exhibited them in public under a placard stating that the revolt was as good as over. Martí was then buried by his foes respectfully enough. His grave in an obscure corner of the cemetery is a place of pilgrimage.

But the Spaniards were deluding themselves. The death of this man shocked and grieved the Cuban people, and at the same time rallied them to the support of the revolution as nothing else could have done. Guerilla bands took the field in every province, showing a unanimity that it had been impossible to arouse in the Ten Years' War. Fiery young Generals came up: Mario G. Menocal, for instance, an engineer educated in the United States, an adept at machete charges and a future President.

Máximo Gómez, his army growing daily, slashed hard at the enemy in the east and won several battles. Spain, thoroughly alarmed, poured thousands of troops into Cuba until the patriots were vastly outnumbered. A defensive line of blockhouses linked with barbed-wire entanglements was drawn across the middle of the island, in the belief that it would separate the main bodies of revolutionists, the latter to be broken up at leisure. This works was called the Spanish Trocha. Gómez laughed at it. He sent Maceo to cut it, a trick the mulatto performed easily and then raided as far west as Pinar del Rio province. Gómez followed to the outskirts of Havana. The Trocha was repaired and strengthened, but there never was a time when the Cubans could not pierce it at will.



*Courtesy of the New York Public Library*

*Fototipia Lacoste—Madrid*

JOSÉ MARTÍ





Early in 1896, Madrid sent Valeriano Weyler with supreme authority as Captain-General and military chief. A shriveled little man with a pitiless heart, he was soon known as the "Butcher." His methods were in the long run suicidal, for they fell short of success while arousing such horror in the United States that intervention became a political issue there. Weyler herded the families of Cubans under arms and their friends into concentration camps, where they suffered from starvation and disease until the mortality rate appalled humanity. He devastated every part of the island that his soldiers could reach, massacred prisoners and destroyed field hospitals with all the sick and wounded in them. He enrolled local criminals and sent them out to murder and loot unchecked.

The Cubans retaliated by luring the green European levies into snares and killing them like vermin, firing the canefields and striking at individuals even in large towns by means of night raids. The insurrectos, however, could not do so much damage as the Spaniards. They were poorly supplied with weapons, and when it came to wrecking their own country they had certain inhibitions. Weyler stopped at nothing. It was beyond his power to be more ruthless than Boves had been against Bolívar, but he saw to it that that sanguinary Venezuelan chapter of Spain's record had a companion piece.

Stories of atrocities in Cuba filled the American newspapers. Protest meetings drew enormous audiences in New York and other cities, and money was freely contributed. The *junta's* problem at this stage was less one of buying arms than of getting them cleared from United States ports and through the ring of Spanish *guarda costas*. Blockade-runners as daring as any the Caribbean has known performed wonders. An increasing number of soldiers of fortune slipped in with the contraband, for "marching with Gómez" had become a venture of high romance. Frederick Funston, later a General in the United States Army, fought a gun for several months under Menocal and then under Gómez himself.

In December, 1896, the valiant Maceo fell in a skirmish near Havana. His aide-de-camp, son of the generalissimo, Gómez, died quixotically attempting to recover his body. Their loss was felt bitterly throughout Cuba. The wiry old Dominican fought on like the stoic he was, but with waning chances of victory. It is believed that Weyler might have brought the revolution to its knees by the end of 1897. His own notoriety thwarted him, for Spain was growing apprehensive about public opinion in the United States. President Cleveland had made it clear that he would never fight over Cuba. But McKinley had been inaugurated President in March, 1897, and that was another story.

Walter Millis, in his *The Martial Spirit*, treats the drift of the United States toward war with amusing sarcasm. He ascribes it largely to the race for circulation between two New York newspapers. The present fashion is to accept this view uncritically. Millis overemphasizes one side of the picture, however. Genuine emotion had been aroused in many Americans who scorned the "yellow" press, and the Madrid Government was aware of it. In October, 1897, Weyler was recalled and the mild General Blanco appointed in his stead.

Blanco immediately emptied the concentration camps and recommended that Cuba be granted autonomy. The Queen Regent signed decrees setting up a fairly liberal form of self-government under the Crown, to take effect on January 1, 1898. A similar favor had been extended to Puerto Rico shortly before, without a revolution, though probably in fear of one. The Cuban revolutionists have been damned for not accepting the offer, and the United States for not sending them an ultimatum that they must do so or lose the moral support of the republic. This is comic irony of the Millis school.

Neither the Provisional Government nor Gómez and his Generals could conceivably have asked Cuba to take less than independence, after the abyssmal terrors of Weyler's campaign. It would have been an impertinence, as well as contrary to her Caribbean policies—the more important argument—for the United States to order a surrender. Washington had every reason to want Spain out of the New World.

Gómez went to the extreme length of declaring that any Cuban who subscribed to autonomy was a traitor. With the exception of a few defeatist sycophants in Havana, the Cubans applauded him. The war continued.

An enigma of the first magnitude now took precedence over all other considerations. On January 25, 1898, the U. S. S. *Maine* entered Havana Harbor and anchored at the spot designated by the port authorities. She was paying one of those "courtesy" visits which convey a veiled warning. The Spanish officials were irked by her presence, but went out of their way to be polite. No least sign forecast the catastrophe of the night of February 15, when the *Maine* was wrecked by an explosion and foundered with a loss of 252 lives. Captain-General Blanco appreciated the seriousness of the event and apparently did his utmost to arrive at the truth of what had happened. But American public opinion was lashed into a fury of wrath at Spain, who was accused of having ordered the *Maine* blown up. That the "yellow" press capitalized on this feeling is not to be denied. War between the two countries became inevitable.



*Underwood & Underwood*

GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER, COLONEL LEONARD WOOD AND  
COLONEL THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

while he attended to the military job. The idea had been overruled, and Gómez thereafter was ignored.

The brief Santiago campaign was admittedly not handled with noteworthy skill. But it sufficed. Positions to the south and east of Santiago were taken in a series of engagements. Roosevelt performed gallantly at Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill, receiving such extravagant praise from the newspaper correspondents that, in the eyes of the American people, he became *the* hero of the war. But Santiago was strongly garrisoned, and its capture by direct military action would have been a stiff job. On July 3, at the height of the land operations, Admiral Cervera steamed out of the harbor in an attempt to smash through the blockading squadron. Every one of his ships was sent to the bottom or driven ashore.

This broke the confidence of the Spanish General, who agreed to open negotiations for the surrender of the city and all troops within a radius of fifty-five miles. Two weeks later, the Americans raised the Stars and Stripes over Santiago. García refused to attend the ceremony, implying that his army and the Cuban flag had not been assigned sufficiently important roles.

Washington dictated the peace. The pledge to Cuba was kept, but with reservations. There was to be a republic—after the United States had “restored order,” guided the country in establishing democratic institutions, and agreed upon a treaty to safeguard her future relations with Cuba.

Puerto Rico was annexed outright. This island received a novel status in the American scheme of things. It became neither a state nor a territory with the privilege of future statehood, but a possession whose inhabitants were not American citizens. The anomaly was later corrected. Citizenship was granted, and a considerable degree of self-government given to Puerto Rico.

The Philippines, also, were acquired from Spain in 1898. Their problem is outside the scope of these pages. But the fact that a distant Asiatic archipelago was retained shows how seriously the United States was taking herself at that time as a colonizing power.

Cuba accepted the period of tutelage with good grace. General John R. Brooke served as military governor for a year. He diplomatically brought about the disbandment of the veterans, \$3,000,000 being granted by the United States, to be divided among the officers and men. Each common soldier got \$75, in most cases his total pay for the period of the revolution. On January 1, 1900, Leonard Wood, now a General, replaced Brooke as Governor. He gave the country an

excellent administration, co-operated with native officials and cleared the way rapidly for actual independence.

The glory of his regime, however—an event vital to the health and prosperity of the Caribbean region, important to the world at large—was the conquest of yellow fever by a group of army doctors headed by Major Walter Reed. The Americans had found Havana filthy beyond description. A drive, with Major W. C. Gorgas in charge, soon made the city cleaner than it had ever been. But that did not prevent a yellow-fever epidemic from breaking out, which the medical men found puzzling. The well-nigh universal belief was that yellow fever generated in dirty surroundings. It was assumed to be contagious as well as infectious. Care was taken to destroy all clothing and other absorbent material that had come into contact with the sick or dead. Houses which the disease had visited were fumigated, and in some cases burned. These time-honored methods seemed logical, and that was about all that could be said for them.

But there was an old Cuban doctor, Carlos Finlay, son of a Scotchman, who maintained that yellow fever was carried by mosquitoes. He had been convinced, by observation and by statistics which he had been collecting for nineteen years, that the malady never occurred unless these insects were present. He did not know how it was carried. A broad theory was all he had to offer.

General Wood appointed a board which went thoroughly into the matter. After it had exhausted every other possibility, it gave Dr. Finlay's theory a trial, and soon perceived that at last it was on the right track. As the result of a complicated series of experiments, Reed's board discovered that only the female *Stegomyia* mosquito conveyed yellow fever, that she incubated the germ only if she had bitten a patient within the first three days of his illness, and that she could only transmit it from twelve to twenty days afterward. Simple facts, but they cost the lives of Dr. Jesse W. Lazear, of the board, and of several United States soldiers, who bravely volunteered to expose themselves to infection under varying conditions.

Gorgas proceeded to exterminate the *Stegomyia* in Havana, mainly by treating its breeding places and killing the unhatched larvae. Yellow fever disappeared. The method was applied elsewhere, and was uniformly successful. The victory dates from the summer of 1901, a greater one by far than any that has terminated a war between nations.

Six months later, Tomás Estrada Palma, chief of the New York *junta* since the death of Martí, was elected the first President of Cuba, honest old Máximo Gómez having declined the honor with the crisp

statement, "Men of war, for war; and those of peace, for peace." The crux of the settlement with the United States was the Platt Amendment, insisted upon by Washington. It limited the foreign relations and the public debt of Cuba, and provided that the United States might "intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty," et cetera.

On May 20, 1902, Palma took the oath of office, General Wood departed, and Cuba Libre became a reality.

## CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

### THE OCEANS ARE JOINED

[THE Spanish-American War and events growing out of it, not least of which was the succession of Theodore Roosevelt to the presidency of the United States, caused the long-mooted canal to be dug at Panama. The arrival under forced draught of the U.S.S. *Oregon* from the Pacific and around Cape Horn, just in time to join the fleet blockading Cervera's ships in Santiago Harbor, did more than cause a newspaper sensation. Every historian of the period agrees that Washington saw it as an object lesson. In some greater struggle of the future, it might be imperative for the republic's divided navy to mass in force on either coast, and in much better time than the *Oregon* had been able to make. A canal was essential not merely as a commercial proposition, but as part of the national defense.]

The first important treaty ratified under Roosevelt was the Hay-Pauncefote Pact, whereby Great Britain consented to cancellation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 and left the United States with a free hand to dig a waterway either in Panama or Nicaragua. The original version of the new document had stipulated that no canal could be fortified. Roosevelt objected, and the prohibition was dropped. Equality for the ships of all countries remained as the fundamental guarantee.

Whether Panama or Nicaragua were the preferable route was then an open question. The latter probably had more adherents. But a commission sent by the United States to inquire into the matter reported that if the rights of the French company at Panama could be bought for not more than \$40,000,000, it would be cheaper to do the job there. Asked to fix a price, the French said \$109,141,000 and were laughed at. Philippe Bunau-Varilla, who had been the last chief engineer of the de Lesseps project and who for years had pulled wires to induce the United States to buy, promptly scared the Parisian directors into accepting the American figure and left for Washington to resume his work as a lobbyist. The Congress still seemed to favor Nicaragua.

Bunau-Varilla asserts in his *Panama* that he swung the balance by furnishing each Senator with a Nicaraguan postage stamp showing the volcano Mount Monotombo in eruption. It chanced to be active at



that very moment, and the clever propagandist made the point that it would be risky, to say the least, to place a canal where it might be overwhelmed by volcanoes. Monotombo did not actually command the route, but the psychological effect of seeing it on a stamp of the country was great.

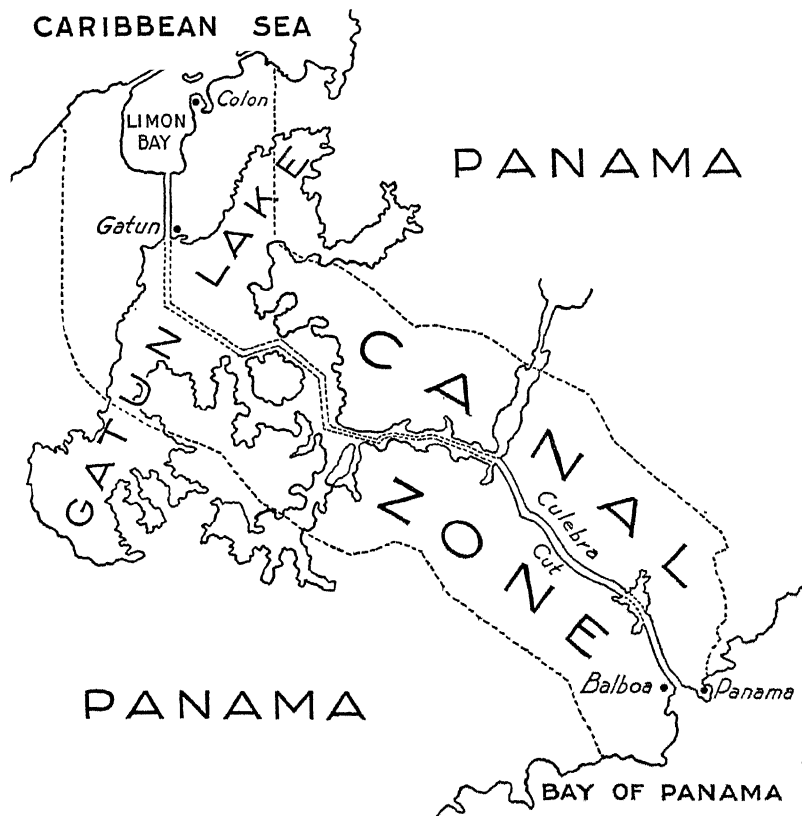
In June, 1902, an act was passed authorizing the work at Panama, if Colombia ratified a satisfactory treaty "within a reasonable time." Failing this, Nicaragua must be substituted. The Hay-Herrán Pact was drawn. It provided for a \$10,000,000 down payment to Colombia and an annual rental for a strip of land six miles wide, three miles on each side of the canal. The United States Senate approved this in March, 1903; but the following August Colombia rejected the treaty, enraged because her attempt to get a larger sum had drawn a note from Washington warning that delay or unfavorable action might compromise "the friendly understanding between the two countries."

The machinations that ensued were unique, even in the melodramatic annals of the Caribbean. As an example of the dealings of a very great Power with a weak one, their pragmatism was startling. Roosevelt had no intention of allowing Colombia to balk him. He recognized that the treaty of 1846 was an obstacle, because it bound the United States to uphold the sovereignty of Colombia in return for the right of free transit across the Isthmus. The President, however, obtained a legal opinion to the effect that by the mere fact of blocking the proposed canal, the pact was being violated by the other party. Delighted with this interpretation, Roosevelt proposed that "without any further parley with Colombia," the United States should "enter upon the completion of the canal which the French company has begun." He was aware that this might be resisted under arms, but as he said on another occasion (referring to the Philippines):

"I thoroughly believe in severe methods when necessary, and am not in the least sensitive about killing any number of men if there is adequate reason."

Bunau-Varilla had a better idea. Craftily seconded by William Nelson Cromwell, the New York attorney for the French stockholders who were to be bought out for \$40,000,000, the engineer put the idea of a revolution into the heads of certain influential Panamanians. If the province which comprised the Isthmus were to set up an independent republic, Bunau-Varilla told them, it could reap all the benefits of the contract with the United States. Dr. Manuel Amador and Federico Boyd agreed, though timidly, to foment such a movement.

It was not so artificial as it seemed. Panama had never felt closely



The Panama Canal

bound to Colombia, had staged fifty-three revolts since 1850, and as the outcome of one of them had enjoyed a form of autonomy, only to have it taken away. United States marines had helped the Bogotá Government to quell some of the disturbances, which was an alarming precedent for the plotters of 1903 to recall. But Bunau-Varilla assured them, without authority, that Washington would now look with favor on their activities. They went ahead and soon had public sentiment behind them.

In September, Dr. Amador went to New York, where he conferred with Bunau-Varilla. He then saw John Hay in Washington and, according to Willis Fletcher Johnson, the Secretary of State expounded the 1846 treaty to him. The United States had guaranteed Colombia's

sovereignty against alien aggression, Hay said, but of course had not undertaken to protect her in the possession of the Isthmus "against local and domestic revolution." As for Panama, the United States could give no promises to "a government which was not yet in existence."

Amador reported these significant words to Bunau-Varilla, who meanwhile had been doing some visiting in Washington himself. The Frenchman advised him to launch the revolution on November 3, averred that friendly American warships would not be far from the scene on that date, gave him funds, and exacted as his own reward the appointment as first Panamanian minister to the United States.

Upon his return to the Isthmus, where he arrived on October 27, Amador worked so speedily that he brought off the revolution in a week, as scheduled. It was a bloodless affair. The Colombian Governor and the General in command of troops in Panama City were won over. Five hundred additional soldiers, landed in Colon on November 2 from a gunboat, were mysteriously prevented by the Panama Railroad from using the line to cross to the Pacific. The U. S. S. *Nashville* arrived simultaneously at Colon, and her commander announced that his instructions were to prevent violence within fifty miles of Panama, to the end that the transit route should not be closed. Colombia officials who had remained loyal to Bogotá saw the light and threw up their hands.

Amador was proclaimed President. The United States Consul at Panama notified Washington on the morning of November 6 that the Republic of Panama was an accomplished fact, and one hour and twenty minutes after he received the cable John Hay extended formal recognition. Bunau-Varilla in his diplomatic capacity was presented to Roosevelt on November 13. The treaty which cleared the way for a canal was signed by Hay and Bunau-Varilla on November 17. It was almost identical with the one Colombia had rejected: \$40,000,000 to the French investors, \$10,000,000 cash and \$250,000 a year to the Panama Government, but the cession in perpetuity of a zone ten miles wide, five miles on each side of the route.

No wonder Roosevelt accepted this solution blithely, if indeed he had not engineered the business down to the last detail. He declared, in a private letter quoted by Joseph B. Bishop:

"If they (the Panamanians) had not revolted, I should have recommended to Congress to take possession of the Isthmus by force of arms; and . . . I had actually written the first draft of my message to this effect. When they revolted, I promptly used the Navy to prevent the bandits, who had tried to hold us up, from spending months of futile

bloodshed in conquering or endeavoring to conquer the Isthmus, to the lasting damage of the Isthmus, to us, and to the world."

There are various ways of looking at this episode. It produced a painful impression throughout Latin America, where the republics inquired blankly which one of them would be the next to be treated as Colombia had been. It virtually erased the good impression made upon those peoples by the liberation of Cuba. The Platt Amendment restricting the last-named, as well as the fact that Puerto Rico had been annexed, acquired a new and sinister meaning. Roosevelt with his "Big Stick" was held to portend a Yankee imperialism that would turn all the nations on the Caribbean into protectorates. Was the Monroe Doctrine to be so interpreted? it was asked. At his worst, the Rough Rider had no such intention, but unfortunately "dollar diplomacy" was to follow his blatant ruthlessness concerning the canal route.

On the other hand, Panama had long been misgoverned, and her desire for independence was sincere, logical. She was not geographically a South-American state. Separated from the lower continent by mountains and dense jungles, there had never been a highway connecting her with Colombia and all communication had been by sea. If the dream of Bolívar could have been fulfilled and Panama had been the central province of a vast Hispanic federation, well and good. But such was not the case, and those who made her a Central American state were doing her a service.

Finally, the building of the canal was so important to the development of every country on the Caribbean Sea that the selfishness of Colombia in delaying it was in a sense criminal. It is impossible for a realistic mind to regret that Theodore Roosevelt got what he wanted, when he wanted it. One wishes only, since the prize was predestined for the United States, that he had employed a more suave diplomacy.

The Americans took over at the end of May, 1904, with absolute confidence that modern engineering methods and equipment would succeed where the French had failed. "Make the dirt fly!" was their slogan. But they might have been sadly disillusioned if they had not had the aid of W. C. Gorgas, promoted to be a Colonel, and his squad of sanitary experts. The war on yellow fever and malaria was waged with the same thoroughness that had been shown in Havana.

Though Gorgas was hampered at first by the red tape inseparable from civilian bureaucratic control, he won the personal support of Roosevelt and in 1905 stamped out a mild yellow-fever epidemic. By October of that year, there were only six convalescent cases—and apparently no *Stegomyia* mosquitoes. The annual death rate from all

causes dropped to under twenty-five per thousand, about the average in a well-conducted Mediterranean city, much lower than in any Oriental community, and only a point or two above that of New York.

The scourge that had thwarted the French was ended. In the next six years, but one case of yellow fever developed on the Isthmus, while malaria became scarcer than at any other point in the American Tropics. This made it a certainty that the canal would be completed. The rest of the task could be measured in the exact terms of man power and money.

After two chief engineers had resigned for rather obscure reasons, President Roosevelt appointed Colonel G. W. Goethals with dictatorial authority, and the work began to move with military precision. It had been decided to abandon the idea of a sea-level canal and to construct it on the lock system. Roosevelt had lucidly explained the matter to Congress in the following message:

"It must be borne in mind that there is no question of building what has been picturesquely termed 'the Straits of Panama'; that is, a waterway through which the largest vessels could go with safety at uninterrupted high speed. Both the sea-level canal and the proposed lock canal would be too narrow and shallow to be called with any truthfulness a strait, or to have any of the properties of a wide, deep-water strip. . . . The lock canal, at a level of eighty feet or thereabouts, would not cost much more than half as much to build, and could be built in about half the time, while there would be very much less risk connected with building it, and for large ships the transit would be quicker; while, taking into account the interest on the amount saved in building, the actual cost of maintenance would be less. After being built, it would be easier to enlarge the lock canal than the sea-level canal."

The cost proved to be \$400,000,000 in round figures. During the period of greatest activity, the number of employees averaged thirty-five thousand, of whom five thousand were white Americans. The day labor was done largely by West Indian Negroes, with Jamaicans predominating and Barbadians next. To obtain their services, Roosevelt swept technicalities aside and proclaimed that the immigration laws of the United States did not apply, until further notice, to the Canal Zone.

In June, 1914, on the eve of the World War, the Panama Railroad's steamer *Allianza* demonstrated that the oceans had been joined by making the first "official" trip between Panama and Colon.

## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

### BANANAS AND DOLLAR DIPLOMACY

NEXT to the Panama Canal, the development of greatest economic importance to the Caribbean region since 1900 has been the phenomenal growth of the banana trade. It has meant more to some countries than even the canal, for bananas have saved them from ruin by taking the place of crops that were no longer profitable, or have enabled them to open up virgin territory. This view, of course, is shortsighted. The canal will in the long run raise the general level of prosperity, whereas the banana is a tricky fruit, subject to diseases, and which so exhausts the soil in which it is planted that the areas of cultivation have to be shifted at intervals of about twenty-five years. The fact remains that banana-growing has been a bonanza, second only in Caribbean history to the sugar bonanza of the Eighteenth Century. ☞

In 1866, a steward on a liner from Colon bought several bunches of yellow bananas on a speculation and offered them for sale in New York. To his surprise, he sold them at a handsome profit and was asked if he could furnish more. He and his two brothers started a small importing business, the first in what was to become a gigantic commerce.

Four years later, Captain Lorenzo D. Baker, a New Englander, called in his tramp steamer at Morant Bay, Jamaica, after a disappointing voyage to the Orinoco River. He decided to experiment with bananas, and did so well with the few he took to New York that he returned and ran a full cargo to Boston. This led to much bigger things than had been the case with the Colon steward's flurry. Captain Baker started a fleet of schooners to run regularly between Jamaica and Boston, taking out general merchandise and bringing back bananas. He could not swing it alone. Nine men joined him and formed a company, which in time established plantations in Jamaica and spread to Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Ably directed by Andrew W. Preston, it was not until the late 1890's that the venture became of real significance to the future of those countries. The banana was by then Jamaica's chief crop.

A parallel development had been taking place in Costa Rica. Minor C. Keith, of Brooklyn, New York, arrived in Puerto Limón at the end of December, 1871, to join his brother in a railroad project. He

made money and concluded that he would remain and go into general business. He married into a good Costa Rican family with political influence, which helped. The new railroad was short on traffic, and this moved Keith to import banana suckers and plant them on the low rich lands around Puerto Limón. He shipped the fruit to New Orleans, sending the first full cargo in 1881. Thus began the vast banana plantations on the Caribbean coast of Central America, Panama and Colombia, which have now reached a total of some 4,000,000 acres.

In 1900, the Preston and Keith interests were merged to form the United Fruit Company, a factor of incalculable power throughout half the region. Its fleet of passenger and freight ships constitutes the only regular means of communication between many points. Its payroll is enormous. It creates, directly or indirectly, the revenue without which more than one government would go into bankruptcy. Other concerns in the field offer a trivial rivalry.

The rise of the United Fruit Company coincided with North American imperialism as illustrated by the war with Spain and the policies of Theodore Roosevelt. Shortly afterward came dollar diplomacy. But it would be an error to suppose that the company either inspired the latter or sought to benefit by it. United Fruit conducted a commercial imperialism of its own and needed no help from Washington. It has had its finger in the politics of Central American republics, even to the extent of hand-picking presidents and members of the legislature. In other quarters, for instance the Crown Colony of Jamaica, its influence has been more subtly but just as surely exercised. There is place for a truly objective treatise on this company, an acuter one than has yet been written. It has been too often attacked in print with indiscriminating venom, or nauseously sugared by its flatterers.

Imperialism *à la* Roosevelt and dollar diplomacy were not identical, for the second was only the misbegotten child of the first. Violent and domineering though imperialism might have been, its motivation was nationalistic egotism, a superiority complex, an eagerness to exert power and extend a crescent energy; but it was not concerned with immediate cash profits. It did not wrap the flag around the American traveling salesman, or give him an armed bodyguard. While it was feared, often hated, the smaller nations understood it well enough and felt in their more cynical moments that, given the chance, they might have been imperialistic, too.

Following the Panama incident, Roosevelt's first use of the "Big Stick" was in the Dominican Republic. Revolutionary disorders and the looting of public funds had reduced that country to bankruptcy.

The interest on the foreign debt was not being paid, and between 1901 and 1904 five European Powers backed the claims of their bondholders with remonstrances that pointed to intervention. A large part of the debt was owed in the United States. On a strong hint from Washington in 1904, the European threat was scotched by a request from the Dominican Government that the United States take charge of the collection of customs duties and adjust the finances of the republic.

In laying the matter before Congress, Roosevelt announced his well-known corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. "Chronic wrongdoing," or a "loosening of the ties of civilized society," the President stated, might force the United States to exercise "an international police power" in the Americas. Then came the corollary: "It has for some time been obvious that those who profit by the Monroe Doctrine must accept certain responsibilities along with the rights which it confers. . . . It is incompatible with international equity for the United States to refuse to allow other Powers to take the only means of satisfying the claims of their creditors and yet to refuse, itself, to take any such steps."

The Latin nations learned with some distaste that the morals of their internal economy would be supervised according to standards set in Washington. They accused Roosevelt of jumping in ahead of the European creditors, so as to collect Dominican money for his own people. But it did not work out that way. The Rough Rider declined to allow American bondholders any preference, but ordered the revenue divided on the basis of fifty-five per cent on the debt, share and share alike, and forty-five per cent to the Dominican Government. The chance to control politically another Caribbean country was what he cared about, with the military defense of the Panama Canal his chief reason for caring.

In 1907, the two Governments ratified a treaty. This empowered the United States to protect its general receiver of customs in the Dominican Republic by landing troops, if necessary, to quell disorders. The relationship of overlord and vassal was now official, but full advantage of it was not taken until the presidency of Woodrow Wilson.

Cuba, in 1906, became the scene of intervention in another form. Tomás Estrada Palma had given the country an honest, economical administration, and had been re-elected. But his opponents followed the bad example of older Spanish-American states. Claiming that thousands of fraudulent ballots had been cast, they rose in revolt. Palma asked the United States to apply the provision of the Platt Amendment, and shortly afterward resigned.

Roosevelt was extremely reluctant to interfere in a state which he



had helped to make a republic, and where the United States already had ample powers of supervision. But when he found that Palma would not withdraw his resignation, he took more sweeping action than the case called for. He served warning on the rebels by landing a few troops. Then he suspended the Cuban constitution, appointed Charles E. Magoon as Governor, and authorized a commission headed by Colonel Enoch H. Crowder, of the United States Army, to overhaul the administrative code and revise the electoral law.

Magoon remained for two years and two months, which was at least one year too long. He was not the sort of man to rule a Spanish-American country by decree. Easy-going to a fault, he allowed his Cuban assistants to dissipate most of the reserve funds saved by the previous regime. Crowder, however, achieved reforms. A fair election was held in 1908, and the following January the Americans turned over the Government to the winning candidate, General José Miguel Gómez.

The scope of imperialism under Theodore Roosevelt was not, as we have seen, widespread in the Caribbean region. Panama had been so sensational a departure that its laurels almost sufficed for a two-term presidency. Enough happened otherwise to indicate a drift which would have done sad things to the cause of self-determination for small peoples, if the strong man had been in power longer. But he passed, and was succeeded by the portly and genial Taft, whose administration did still sadder things.

Taft chose Philander C. Knox as his Secretary of State. To the latter gentleman belongs the distinction of inventing dollar diplomacy, which roughly was a method of using the representatives abroad and the armed forces of the United States to create business for American capital. The classic example was Nicaragua.

A revolution broke out in October, 1909, against the dictator, José Santos Zelaya. The Consul at Bluefields, Thomas C. Moffatt, at once cabled Washington that the Provisional Government which had been set up was "friendly to American interests," and that it guaranteed "annulment of all concessions," held by other foreigners. Knox lent a sympathetic ear, and when two American filibusters fighting with the revolutionists were taken in November by the Zelaya forces and executed, the Secretary of State gave the Nicaraguan Minister his passports and announced that compensation for their deaths would be demanded. Soldiers of fortune had never before been rated so tenderly. This and other signs of favoritism, including the landing of marines to "keep open" the port of Bluefields, made Zelaya's position untenable. The insurgents took over the Government in August, 1910. Knox prom-

ised that, after legitimate claims had been adjudicated, the State Department would "use its good offices" to obtain a loan for Nicaragua from "some American financiers of high standing."

Not one loan but several were forthcoming, for which Nicaragua pledged customs receipts, tobacco and liquor taxes, railroad stock and other values. By the end of 1912, the country was wholly in pawn to American financiers. Uprisings against the Government had several times been crushed by American troops. A permanent guard of a hundred marines was finally stationed in the capital, one of its principal duties being to guard the polls during elections at which "pro-Yankee" candidates were invariably successful.

The beauties of this system were described by President Taft in a message on foreign relations he sent to Congress in 1912. He wrote, plainly inspired by Knox rather than Roosevelt:

"It is obvious that the Monroe Doctrine is more vital in the neighborhood of the Panama Canal and the zone of the Caribbean than anywhere else. It is therefore essential that the countries within that sphere shall be removed from the jeopardy involved by heavy foreign debt and chaotic national finances and from the ever-present danger of international complications due to disorder at home. Hence the United States has been glad to encourage and support American bankers who were willing to lend a helping hand to the financial rehabilitation of such countries. . . . The Republics of Central America and the Caribbean possess great natural wealth. They need only a measure of stability and the means of financial regeneration to enter upon an era of peace and prosperity, bringing profit and happiness to themselves and at the same time creating conditions sure to lead to a flourishing interchange of trade with this country."

Happily, the ill repute that the above gave the Monroe Doctrine in the minds of Latin-American patriots, has been dispelled by the present Government of the United States.

Lighter pressure of the same general character as that applied in Nicaragua was brought to bear by Secretary Knox in other Central-American republics. Coincidentally, there was great activity by professional filibusters, the best known being General Lee Christmas, an ex-railroad engineer from Louisiana, who several times swung the balance in Honduran revolutions. He and his kind, second-rate imitators of William Walker, were bad for business, but it was often politic for

dollar diplomacy to protect the worthless skins of these symbols of American penetration.

In the Dominican Republic, the control given by the treaty of 1907 was tightened. The assassination of President Ramón Cáceres and the triangular revolution that followed opened the way for the sending of commissioners from Washington. The latter suggested as a chief executive none other than the Catholic Archbishop of Santo Domingo, and he was elected.

But the richest field, next to Nicaragua, was Cuba. Large concessions to American capitalists were granted there by President José Miguel Gómez, who understood perfectly that his country was a protectorate, and who seldom failed to exact a bonus as his personal reward. His complacency did not help him in 1912, when a small revolt occurred and he begged Taft and Knox not to invoke the Platt Amendment. Troops were landed, anyway, and although soon withdrawn as the crisis ended, their presence for so slight a cause made Cubans feel that independence was a sham.

## CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

### DURING THE WORLD WAR

CARIBBEAN destinies during the World War were molded rather by the policies of Woodrow Wilson than by the great conflict itself. The period starts, therefore, with Wilson's accession to the presidency on March 4, 1913. He was profoundly personal in the manner in which he disciplined those republics which offended him. The subservient he patted on the head, and generally speaking he meddled everywhere, save in Colombia, Venezuela and the colonies of European Powers. The first phase lasted until the United States entered the war. The second phase was not so personal. From 1917 on, the *status quo* was maintained in protectorates, while the independent countries were expected to support the Allies. Those which proved pro-German were left undisturbed, because the struggle ended before it seemed worth while to bother about their attitude.

Wilson cannot be credited with abandoning dollar diplomacy, though he frowned upon its more obviously sordid manifestations. He protected American capital where it was already entrenched. Imperialism was a word he abhorred. Yet he did much to carry forward the Roosevelt doctrine that backward countries should be policed, while giving it a coloration peculiarly his own. With the ardor of a reformer, a puritan in politics, he took the stand that the United States had a mission to raise the tone of democracy among her neighbors. He brandished a schoolmaster's rod in place of the "Big Stick," and consequently gave the impression of being sanctimonious where Roosevelt had been candid. This did not in the least deter him from landing bayonets after his speciously pacific arguments had failed.

A Mexican crisis of great importance awaited Wilson's attention as he entered the White House. The thirty-year dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz had been overthrown in 1911 by Francisco I. Madero, an idealist who had promised to better the lot of the peons and especially to restore lands which had been unjustly taken from small proprietors. The Madero Government had failed to do as much as was expected of it, partly because it still had armed opponents in the field. A serious counter-revolution broke out in February, 1913, the original leaders of which were brushed aside by General Victoriano Huerta, a former

protégé of Díaz who had stood by the old despot to the last, had acknowledged the authority of the new President as a routine military matter, and had become chief of the forces in the capital.

Huerta had arrested Madero and the latter's Vice-President, Piño Suarez, and had extorted their resignations. While being transferred from one prison to another, they had been mysteriously shot to death. A juggling of cabinet posts made Huerta the legal acting head of the state, and he had sought recognition by the United States. Only the time element, in all probability, prevented the Taft Administration from granting this, as it had never been the practice of Washington to question the credentials of *de facto* Presidents in Latin America. The matter was held over, and Wilson precipitated one of the most remarkable controversies in the history of New-World diplomacy. He not only refused to recognize Huerta, but made it clear that he intended to force him out of office by moral suasion, because he did not approve of him. He called it "watchful waiting," yet soon implemented it by raising the embargo on the exportation of arms to General Venustiano Carranza and others who were opposing Huerta in the north of Mexico.

"We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of Government to advance their own personal interest and ambition," Wilson said, and remarked later: "We have not acted in this matter under the ordinary principles of international obligation."

He withheld recognition even after Huerta was elected to the presidency by popular vote at the end of 1913. Certain Paris bankers having expressed willingness to advance money, Washington informed the French Government that any loan to Huerta would be considered "an unfriendly act," and the loan was canceled.

Then occurred the Tampico incident. A boatload of United States marines, under a petty officer, went ashore to buy oil. They had no right to attempt this without a permit. The port of Tampico was under martial law, and a battle between federals and revolutionists was actually going on. When the marines landed at a dock in the forbidden military zone, they were arrested by a Mexican colonel and taken to headquarters. There they were promptly released and the General in command sent his apologies to Admiral Mayo.

Nevertheless, Wilson declared that the United States had been insulted. He ruled that, in addition to other reparations, Huerta must accord a salute of twenty-one guns to the American flag. It sounded childish, but it was—at last—an ultimatum. Huerta declined to humiliate his country in such comic-opera fashion. He offered to submit the dispute to The Hague, and was snubbed. The occupation of Vera Cruz

was thereupon ordered, with the implication that the salute was to be compelled. It was never given. But considerable bloodshed occurred in the fighting in and about Vera Cruz.

"We have gone down to Mexico to serve mankind," stated Wilson. "We do not want to fight the Mexicans. We want to serve the Mexicans if we can, because we know how we would like to be free, and how we would like to be served if there were friends by, ready to serve us."

It is doubtful whether Mexico considered herself to have been "served." Vera Cruz, however, was fatal to Huerta, who signed his abdication in July, 1914, on the eve of the World War and fled to Jamaica. A succession of bandits plundered Mexico City before Carranza, Madero's logical heir, arrived and installed himself as President, with Wilson's blessing.

Incensed at this result, Pancho Villa, a colorful brigand chief who claimed that his radicalism was of a more authentic brand, raided across the United States border. General John J. Pershing was sent into Mexico on a punitive expedition in 1916, but he did not catch Villa and was withdrawn when American participation in the European melee became a certainty.

Nicaragua, thoroughly tamed for the time being by dollar diplomacy, gave Wilson no trouble. On February 18, 1916, the important Bryan-Chamorro Treaty was signed. It conveyed to the United States, in return for \$3,000,000 paid Nicaragua, the right in perpetuity to construct an interoceanic canal by way of the San Juan River or any other route in the territory of the Republic. It yielded sites for naval bases on both the Caribbean and the Pacific.

In Haiti, political anarchy and financial scandals of the most serious nature had long been bringing about a condition that practically forced the United States to intervene. During the six and a half years preceding July, 1915, seven Presidents were deposed by revolutions. Of these, four were murdered, one being blown up in the palace, one poisoned, one slain with a group of other prisoners, and the last literally torn apart by a mob.

The Banque Nationale d'Haiti had been outrageously mismanaged and its funds plundered by local officials. Reorganized to protect the legitimate claims of foreign creditors, the bank passed into the control of American, English, French and German shareholders. But ephemeral governments continued to waste the public revenue and to borrow at enormous discounts. The interested European countries all threatened to compel the settlement of their claims by force. This the United States was determined not to allow.

At the end of December, 1914, marines were landed from the U. S. S. *Machias*, at the request of the Banque Nationale. They removed \$500,000 in gold coin from the reserve fund and took the money to New York for safekeeping. The United States Navy patrolled the Haitian coast, thereafter, and in February, 1915, may be said to have supervised the revolution started at Cap Haitien (the former Cap François) by General Vilbrun Guillaume Sam. Admiral William B. Caperton met Sam "unofficially" and warned him that there must be no looting or burning of towns on his march to the capital. The astounded candidate had no choice but to promise, intending doubtless to do as he pleased. But at each major halt, he was met by American officers who reminded him of his agreement, and Sam reached Port-au-Prince without having committed the usual atrocities. He was elected President by the National Assembly on March 4, his predecessor having already decamped.

Commissioners presently arrived from Washington and urged on the Sam Government a treaty similar to the 1907 pact with the Dominican Republic. This would have given the United States full control of Haitian finances, but Sam contrived to drag out the negotiations by suggesting a counter project, and the commissioners left. In May, a new revolution began to simmer in the north. Admiral Caperton forbade any fighting in Cap Haitien and threatened to land marines to protect the lives and property of foreigners. The situation became tense by the middle of July, disaffection having spread to Port-au-Prince. Sam ordered the arrest of all the plotters and suspects on whom he could lay hands. Nearly two hundred were jailed, including many prominent citizens.

Early on the morning of July 27, shots were fired at the palace and the force guarding it melted away. The President took refuge in the French legation next door. It is not known whether Sam issued the order, but within an hour or two his most trusted lieutenant went to the national prison and massacred 167 of the political suspects being held there. A wave of frenzy swept Port-au-Prince at the news. The uprising that followed differed from the average Haitian revolution, in that it was spontaneous and general. The mob hunted down and killed those chiefly responsible for the butchery. The French legation was violated. Sam was dragged from under a bed and thrown over a gate into the street. A woman is said to have been the first to plunge a knife into his body, which was then beheaded and mutilated, and the fragments paraded through the city.

The above horrible events opened the way for a military protectorate

by the United States. Admiral Caperton landed two companies of marines and three of sailors. Order was restored, in collaboration with a local committee of public safety. Sudre Dartiguenave, a Senator agreeable to Washington, was chosen President in August. He and a subdued legislature accepted a treaty which provided for Americans as financial adviser and as general receiver of customs. The establishment of a *gendarmerie*, to be organized and officered by Americans, was authorized. The United States undertook to aid in the development of the country's agricultural, mineral and commercial resources, and to improve sanitation. Shortly afterward, a new constitution, drafted by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was adopted by a managed vote of the people in a plebiscite.

The Haitian elite writhed, but it is incontestable that the country benefited materially by the American occupation, which was to last for nearly twenty years.

A tighter hold was taken on the Dominican Republic at the same time. In 1915, Washington suggested a more drastic treaty than the one of 1907. It was proposed that the customs, treasury, army and police be placed under the direction of United States officials. A stern warning against civil disorder was uttered. The following year, a revolution broke out notwithstanding, and marines were immediately landed to suppress it. The President resigned, and his temporary successor chosen by the Dominican Congress was refused recognition unless he accepted the treaty. He resisted stubbornly. On November 29, 1916, Captain H. S. Knapp, commander of the United States naval detachment, declared martial law, ousted both President and legislature and proclaimed himself "supreme executor." American officers took charge of all the executive departments. The military government thus established lasted for eight years.

Before she entered the World War, the United States had seen to it, partly as a defense measure relating to the Panama Canal, that she controlled the entire island of Hispaniola. Her rule in the two republics differed in form, but not greatly in substance. Haiti was governed through a puppet President, a Council of State and at times a legislature, whereas these were dispensed with in the Dominican Republic.

One other momentous step toward dominating the Caribbean was taken by the Wilson Administration in 1916. The islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John, in the Virgin Islands group, were bought from Denmark for \$25,000,000. It was the fourth time in sixty years that a pact to effect a transfer had been drawn. On previous occasions, either the United States Senate or the Danish Rigsdag had refused to



ratify. The deal now went through at a figure more than thrice as high as the best earlier offer. "They were purchased primarily for strategic purposes," remarked Senator Kenyon. "St. Thomas and its harbor is the strongest and most easily fortified spot in the West Indies."

In April, 1917, the United States declared war against Germany. Cuba and Panama immediately followed suit. The first-named country was just then on the best of terms with Washington, the election of Mario G. Menocal to a second term as President having been upheld by the landing of marines, for which the General was properly grateful. Nicaragua and Haiti, being wards with legislatures, also went through the motions of declaring war. Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica fell into line. The Dominican Republic, being in a state of suspension, was unable to do so.

President Carranza of Mexico, though he had been helped into office by Wilson, had become bitterly hostile to the United States. He seized the opportunity to flaunt pro-German sentiments, and even broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba to manifest his feeling. Venezuela's neutrality was unfriendly to the Allies, while that of Colombia and Salvador was benevolent.

The action of the World War never impinged upon the Caribbean region. Troops were raised in the English and French colonies. The Latin-American republics sent no expeditionary forces, but many individuals enlisted as volunteers under other flags. On the economic side, an increased demand for cane sugar, while the beet areas of Europe lay idle, brought temporary wealth to Cuba and to all the former sugar islands. Unheard-of prices were realized during the first two years after the Armistice, only to be followed by a sudden deflation of the boom in 1921.

## CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

### THE STATE OF THE REPUBLICS

IT WILL be impossible to do more in this chapter than sketch the political developments that have occurred in the Caribbean republics since the World War. Direct interference by the United States began to diminish during the 1920's. The era was one of great prosperity in the north, and the Knox school of dollar diplomacy no longer seemed necessary to aid American business. The oil fields of Mexico and Venezuela proved a ready-made outlet for capital. International finance was in a reckless mood, anyway. The New York bankers, having more fluid funds than they knew what to do with, extended credit to small countries without putting them in pawn or even asking for proper collateral. This state of affairs continued until the world-wide depression of 1929.

In addition, the foreign policy of the United States showed a tendency to return to the original meaning of the Monroe Doctrine. Cooperation rather than coercion became the watchword. Pan-Americanism acquired a new significance. It had previously been little more than a willingness on the part of Washington to work with powerful states like Brazil and Argentina. A few faint signs of the change were perceptible during the Coolidge Administration, and there was a marked advance under Hoover. But Franklin D. Roosevelt completely reversed the methods which had caused the Latin-American peoples to dread the United States as the "Colossus of the North." His canceling of such irksome restrictions as the Platt Amendment in connection with Cuba, his "good-neighbor" attitude, and the reciprocal trade treaties negotiated by Secretary of State Hull, all have worked toward a better understanding.)

The fact of the military predominance of the United States in the Caribbean remains unaltered. This should be borne in mind as we review the condition of the lesser powers who also have the right to call it "Our Sea."

Mexico did not find peace when the agrarian revolution led by Carranza triumphed over Huerta and later suppressed the extremists who regarded Carranza as too mild. The constitution adopted in 1917 seemed visionary to the outside world, but it responded to the real needs of the country. Going further than even the idealist Madero had

dared to go, it declared the peons free of the debt system by which they had been enslaved for centuries, and provided for the breaking up of large estates in order that communal grants of land could be made to villages. It established a sound labor code. It nationalized water and mineral wealth. It severely restricted the activities of the Church, and confiscated most of the Church's property.

Unfortunately, Carranza did not enforce the constitution he had fathered. He was overthrown in 1920 by Alvaro Obregón, aided by Plutarco Calles, and while fleeing in the direction of Vera Cruz he was assassinated. Obregón and Calles alternated in the presidency until the former also was murdered. Then Calles took full charge of the revolution and was virtually dictator until 1934, though at times he allowed the chief magistracy to be filled by lesser members of his party. He handled the Church ruthlessly, hastened the distribution of land among the peons, and favored the cause of organized labor. For these reasons, his Government was charged abroad with being a form of Communism. But the younger radicals of Mexico did not consider it sufficiently advanced. The next overturn was unique in the history of the country, because it occurred without an armed revolt.

General Lázaro Cárdenas had risen steadily in the administration until he became the logical successor to the presidency. He was nominated with the approval of Calles, peacefully elected in 1934, and assumed office in December of that year. Without delay, he and his leftist cabinet began to apply the constitution of 1917 in all its details. Calles criticized him harshly. The President's answer was to sweep all adherents of the old dictator from important public office. He eventually forced Calles into permanent exile.

The Cárdenas Government has come as near as is humanly possible, in the existing circumstances, to ruling Mexico for the benefit of the masses. Yet it is not Communist. It mistrusts capitalism and regulates it strictly, no more than that. Foreign concessionnaires have been deprived of their holdings, wherever it could be shown that they had acquired these under conditions detrimental to the public interest. Education and agrarian science have been fostered assiduously. The vast peon class is said to be well on its way toward peasant proprietorship. The Government is semi-totalitarian, and Cárdenas presumably has the machinery with which to perpetuate himself in office. He has announced, however, that he will retire in 1940 at the end of his constitutional term of six years, and as these pages are written an electoral campaign to choose his successor is being waged.

In Central America, the political kaleidoscope has often rearranged

itself since the World War, but, Nicaragua excepted, it has simply fallen into time-worn patterns. The sinister Guatemalan dictator, Manuel Cabrera, who had held power for longer than twenty years, was deposed in 1920. His successor had pretensions to liberalism, and once more a union of the republics was attempted. Only Guatemala, Honduras and Salvador joined it, and they fell apart as a result of a new revolution in the first-named. A Treaty of Amity among all five was signed instead, in 1923, providing for arbitration of disputes and recognition for none but legally elected governments. This has done some good, but it has not succeeded in outlawing the *coup d'état*. Only Costa Rica holds elections according to true democratic procedure, and even Costa Rica has had one President, Tinoco, who usurped authority in 1917.

The United States loosened the strangle-hold on Nicaragua when the marines were withdrawn in August, 1925, and replaced by a native constabulary trained and officered by Americans. The next choice of a President was nonetheless engineered to suit Washington, and civil war broke out. Back came the marines, 2,000 of them, "at the request" of the Chamorro family, which has been all-powerful among Nicaraguan Conservatives for generations. By 1928, there were 5,600 marines. Continuous skirmishing took place in all parts of the country, the American casualties being fairly heavy. A native guerilla leader of talent had arisen in the person of Augusto César Sandino, who better than held his own for a number of years. He has been called a bandit, which he emphatically was not. Sandino personified all that was left of independent patriotism, and he became the hero of the common people. He was never captured by the marines.

The last American troops left Nicaragua in 1933 and the country was turned over to a Liberal administration. The inevitable dictator soon materialized. General Anastacio Somoza, who still rules, solidified his position when he lured Sandino into a trap and had him murdered.

Panama's peculiar status as a republic held under close guardianship because of the canal, and profiting greatly from the commerce incidental to that waterway, has been a deterrent to revolutions. A coup did occur in 1931, but it was managed swiftly and with a minimum of bloodshed, and Washington allowed it to pass. Panama has challenged her mentor only once, and then shrewdly. The United States dollar having been devalued in 1933, Panama refused the next check for \$250,000 proffered for the annual rental of the canal route. She pointed out that the treaty called for payment in gold, and she demanded as many paper dollars as the United States Treasury now said that much

gold was worth. She won her point, after the matter had been fought out in the courts.

Colombia had been appeased in connection with the canal as far back as 1921. Following long negotiations, which Theodore Roosevelt denounced up till his death in 1919 as ridiculous, it was agreed that the United States should pay \$25,000,000 by way of compensation for the stratagem of 1903 and grant certain rights in the zone, and that Colombia should recognize the Republic of Panama. This great South American state has had no revolution for thirty-seven years, despite the fact that a long succession of Conservative Presidents was replaced in 1930 by a succession of Liberal Presidents. Colombia today has an embryo Fascist Party, but few regard it as a serious menace to her democratic system. Dr. F. A. Kirkpatrick, the historian, extolled her in 1939 as an object lesson to "those who doubt the future of these tropical republics of mixed Spanish, Indian and African blood."

Venezuela was governed from the end of 1908 until his death in December, 1935, by the extraordinary despot, Juan Vicente Gómez. Unmarried, he boasted of having a hundred children. On the side of practical statesmanship, he challenged comparison with Porfirio Díaz of Mexico, in that he stimulated agriculture and industry, raised the standard of education, and freed his country of debt. The revenue from the Maracaibo oil fields, opened in 1918, enabled him to do these things. But Gómez accompanied his paternalism with a gigantic acquisitiveness for himself and his entourage, and with a monstrous venom toward his political opponents. He kept the dungeons of La Guayra and Puerto Cabello filled, put many to the torture, and drove thousands into exile. The dwindling irreconcilables who still revolted in the latter years were ground under his heel, like nests of snakes. The Caribbean region has known only one more cruel dictator, and we shall come to him presently.

Gómez, naturally, was much admired by foreign capitalists, whose profits he assured along with his own by maintaining order. His vigor was boundless, his judgment of men uncanny, and he lived to the age of seventy-eight. When he passed, his Minister of War, General Lopez Contreras, took over a smoothly-running machine. Contreras has had the wisdom to introduce liberal reforms, permit the refugees to come home, and force the beneficiaries of the old regime to disgorge much plunder. He placed a special "tax" of some \$30,000,000 on the estate left by Gómez.

The military occupation of the Dominican Republic was voluntarily

ended by the United States in 1924. A native administration with most of the weaknesses of those of days gone by installed itself and was soon hard pressed by insurrectionist movements. But there emerged an efficient, modern-minded young officer, trained under the Americans, Rafael Trujillo, a man with a Fascist streak in him and an overweening vanity. He thrust aside the confederate who had helped him execute a hair-trigger revolution, had himself elected President in 1930 and has since been an arbiter whose good works have been marred by restraints on individual freedom, ruthless killings, nepotism and self-glorification.

He rebuilt Santo Domingo in admirable fashion after a hurricane, and then must needs change the name of the oldest colonial city in the New World to Ciudad Trujillo. He buried the body of his obscure father in the crypt of the Cathedral, among the bones of the conquistadores. He allowed a sycophantic official to erect an electric sign in the capital, "*Dios y Trujillo*." Tiring of negotiations with Haiti for the repatriation of ten thousand of the latter's peasantry who had crossed the border in search of work, he countenanced a massacre of many of these unfortunates in 1939. On the credit side—a contribution of the greatest moment—Trujillo has done more to rejuvenate the economic life of the country than any of his predecessors since independence.

Haiti's road to freedom from American control was longer and harder than that traversed by the Dominican Republic, but her gain in financial solvency, sanitation, good roads, public buildings and education was correspondingly great. In 1918, an uprising of peasants known as *cacos* assumed dangerous proportions. By the following spring it was estimated that some five thousand men had taken the field in the northern and central districts. They had revolted against being forced to labor at road-building under an old Haitian law. The marines stamped out the trouble in the summer of 1920, and thereafter the preservation of order was largely entrusted to the *gendarmérie*, which had become a well-disciplined force.

In 1922, Louis Borno, a mulatto of the finest type, was elected President for four years by the Council of State, consisting of twenty-one men. This body re-elected him to a second term in 1926. He dispensed with both Senate and Chamber until 1930.

Borno has been accused of catering to the Americans, instead of asserting Haitian rights and attempting to bring the occupation to an end, as Dartiguenave had somewhat feebly striven to do. The accusation is unjust. Washington had elevated General John H. Russell, commanding the military forces, to the double post of High Commissioner

and diplomatic representative. Co-operation with Russell was the only way of getting anything for Haiti, and this Borno practiced with considerable tact.

The constitution was amended in 1927. The presidential term was lengthened to six years, but the clause made anyone who had served two terms ineligible. Borno showed signs of wishing to evade the prohibition against himself, and the mob clamored in 1929 for a new chief of state and a legislature. This appeared to hasten the decision of the United States to end the occupation. President Hoover sent a commission, which recommended modifications of the military regime and an immediate free election. High Commissioner Russell was replaced by a minister. A new treaty guaranteed the withdrawal of the marines by December 31, 1934.

Stenio Vincent was chosen President in 1930. He behaved with discretion and praiseworthy liberalism until the last marines were recalled by Franklin D. Roosevelt ahead of time, in August, 1934. The familiar traits of the Haitian dictator, albeit in mild form, were then manifested by Vincent. He defied the constitution in 1936 by proposing that his term be extended for five years. The question was submitted to a "popular" referendum and a favorable vote obtained with ease.

Cuba's post-war sugar boom has been called the "Dance of the Millions." It led to such extravaganzas as the paving of the Prado in Havana with marble and the building of an ornate capitol second only in size to that of the United States, while whole families went to Paris and revived the legend that West Indian planters were rich. Its collapse was followed by a weary pessimism, which seemed to corrode the political life of the country. The aged Alfredo Zayas reached the presidency, after having been thwarted in his ambitions since the founding of the republic. He proved to be the most cynical grafter who had ever occupied the office, yet he pompously dedicated a statue to himself on the eve of his departure. He was succeeded by General Gerardo Machado. Nothing in the latter's record forecast what he had in store for Cuba.

Machado was a veteran of the war of independence. He had been a good Liberal administrator in provincial posts, a successful merchant. He now appointed a cabinet that inspired confidence, and for a few months he was lauded as the best of Liberal Presidents. Suddenly his methods became autocratic. He oppressed labor. He showed his resentment of opposition by deporting some of his critics and having others murdered. Cuba felt unhappy about him, but did not act until 1928 when Machado jammed through a change in the constitution, creating

an emergency presidential term of six years and providing that he alone could run in a farcical election.

The students at Havana University took the lead in plotting his overthrow. Many of the older statesmen, including ex-President Menocal, were soon of the same mind. Machado closed all educational institutions above the primary schools, and commenced a general persecution of the liberal elements. A revolt in 1931, led by Menocal, was crushed. As the agitation continued, Machado seemed to lose his senses. A secret society, the "A. B. C." had been formed, and against its members, most of whom were young students of both sexes, he launched a terror that surpassed the worst improvisations of Gómez of Venezuela. Suspects were taken to Morro Castle, tortured to death unless they confessed, and their bodies fed to the sharks. A large number of lads were emasculated and released, to spread the word of doom the sadist in the palace had pronounced against his enemies.

The valor that had marked Cuban resistance to Weyler the "Butcher" was once more in evidence. The revolution could not be halted. Sumner Welles came from the State Department in Washington as special Ambassador, and is said to have urged Machado to resign. But the maniacal despot refused to go until his own army officers turned upon him in September, 1933, and exiled him by airplane.

A provisional government was established, but lasted for only three weeks. Then there occurred the most novel of Caribbean revolts, a *coup d'etat* by non-commissioned officers, adroitly led by the sergeant-stenographer Fulgencio Batista, which ousted the professional military caste and used the rank and file to solve the crisis. After a brief experiment with radical leadership, a man whom all classes respected, Carlos Mendieta, was made acting President. Franklin D. Roosevelt immediately recognized this regime, and in May, 1934, abrogated the Platt Amendment as an indication of faith in Cuba's future stability.

Batista, reputed to be of part Chinese descent, became Chief of the General Staff, with the modest rank of Colonel. He has been the power behind three subsequent administrations, and has proved himself to be a man of advanced social ideas, though tinged with Fascism. He is, in 1940, the leading candidate for the presidency.



## CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

### SOME ISSUES OF 1940

IN SEPTEMBER, 1939, the second great European war of the present century broke out, with indications that it would develop into a world-wide conflict and that it would be of long duration. The rapid crushing of Poland, the Norwegian campaign and the battles of May-June, 1940, in the Low Countries and Northern France manifested that Germany had evolved a dread technique. By the co-ordinated use of mechanized ground units and airplanes, she revolutionized warfare. Her victory in the European sphere seems very possible at the time of writing. It is nonetheless conceivable that the struggle will become world-wide. Italy's participation on the Nazi side in June pointed to that ultimate calamity.

Britain and France, the two chief Allies, are Caribbean Powers. Their warships lost no time in sweeping German commerce from the inland Sea, the captures being mostly tankers trying to run Venezuelan oil through the blockade. But the future of the region was soon affected in far more subtle ways. On October 2, 1939, a "consultation" of the Foreign Offices of the twenty-one American republics, meeting at Panama, issued a warning to the belligerents to commit no act of war within a zone extending roughly three hundred miles from the shores of the Western Hemisphere, excluding Canada. This unenforceable "Declaration of Panama," as it was called, was important mainly as showing that the republics were disposed to stand together.

On May 10, 1940, the day that Holland was attacked without warning by Germany, British and French marines landed on the Dutch West Indian islands of Curaçao and Oruba to prevent, it was announced, the possible sabotage of oil refineries there. The Netherlands Government acknowledged that its garrisons were too feeble to maintain order. Washington, notified in advance, made no objection to this shifting of control from one European Power to another in New-World territory, the first of the kind to occur since the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823.

A few weeks later, the Prime Minister of Canada, W. L. Mackenzie King, revealed to his Parliament that Canadian troops had been sent to the West Indies to relieve British forces stationed there. Another

precedent had been set and the world wondered whether, in the event of the defeat of England, the Dominion might not be asked by London to annex the Caribbean Crown Colonies.

The immediate effect of the foregoing and related factors has been to start a Pan-American movement centering in Washington to review, modernize and strengthen the Monroe Doctrine, with the likelihood that the new version will soon be official. A congressional resolution offered in June declared that the United States "would not recognize any transfer and would not acquiesce in any attempt to transfer any geographical region of the Western Hemisphere from one non-American Power to another non-American Power." It also provided that, "if such a transfer should appear likely, the United States shall, in addition to other measures, immediately consult with other American republics to determine upon steps which should be taken to safeguard their common interests."

It was recalled that President Ulysses S. Grant in his message to Congress December 6, 1869, had voiced a similar principle and had added: "When the present relation of colonies (in the Western Hemisphere) ceases, they are to become independent Powers, exercising the right of choice and of self-control in the determination of their future condition and relations with other Powers." Presidential dicta are not international law until accepted as such. But this one lends more than academic interest, in 1940, to the political aspirations of those Caribbean peoples who now are subjects of a European Power.

War interrupted but it certainly did not quell an ardent movement toward self-government in several of the British possessions. Reference has been made to the anachronistic Crown Colony system. The latter discouraged, and in some islands forbade, even the activities of organized labor. So when the beginnings of a revolt against it occurred in the 1920's, this took the form of an agitation for better conditions for the masses. Captain A. Cipriani, of Trinidad, a white cocoa planter who had commanded West Indian troops in the Palestine Campaign, in 1917-1918, returned home disgusted with the British attitude toward colonials. He founded branches in all parts of the island of a society he called the Workingmen's Association. It was not technically a labor union, but he caused it to function as one, and through its agency he was elected Mayor of Port-of-Spain and a member of the Legislative Council.

Cipriani obtained by indirect means a workmen's compensation law and other benefits. He assailed the injustice which held down the people's representatives to a smaller minority in Trinidad than in any of

the other colonies, and which prevented them from initiating measures. He asked for a larger elected group and for a more advanced system generally. But he stopped short of attacking the absurdity at its root and insisting that England allow Trinidad to conduct her own affairs.

The first clear-cut demand for self-government was made by Jamaicans. In 1936, a coterie of natives of that island, resident in New York, founded an organization named the Jamaica Progressive League, held public meetings, and adopted a program which included the following declaration:

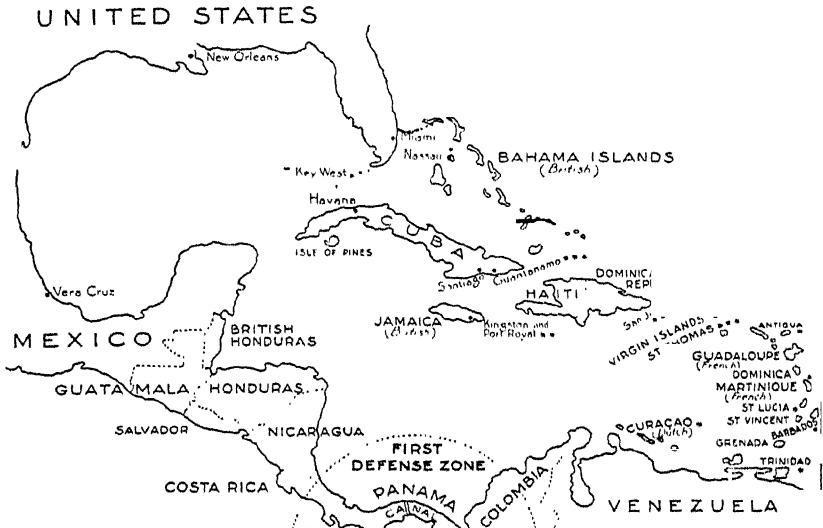
"Firmly believing that any people that has seen its generations come and go on the same soil for centuries is, in fact, a nation, we pledge ourselves to work for the attainment of self-government for Jamaica, so that the country may take its rightful place as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

This amounted to claiming Dominion status, on the model enjoyed by Canada or New Zealand, and the League has never receded from its position. It took the propaganda to Jamaica the following year, and was well received. The People's National Party then came into existence, under the brilliant leadership of Norman Washington Manley, the most prominent lawyer in Jamaica. Its membership soon ran into the thousands. It asked for self-government, and promised to effect a long list of social reforms. It did not emphasize either Dominion status, or the immediate granting of responsible institutions. The British Labour Party was obviously its model. The more nationalistic followers of the Progressive League agreed to support the People's National Party until further notice. There was to have been a general election in Jamaica in 1940, but upon the outbreak of war this was postponed.

Meanwhile, from 1937 on, a wave of strikes and riots sympathetic to labor and to the self-government idea swept the British West Indies. An agitational party of leftist tendencies was formed in Trinidad. British Guiana followed suit. Both the last-mentioned colonies have large Hindu minorities, the descendants of indentured workers imported during the late Nineteenth Century.

In some quarters, it was argued that the administrative units, of which there are eight, excluding Bermuda, should first be federated, with the capital probably in Jamaica. This did not appeal to the nationalist groups. They felt that London would retain many of the evils of the Crown Colony system in a federation, on the grounds that the less advanced islands were not yet "fit" for freedom.

The political movement, accompanied as it was by serious labor unrest, led Britain to send out a Royal Commission headed by Walter



### The Caribbean Today

- \*\*\* Existing United States bases.
- \*\* Essential bases now in foreign hands.
- \* Secondary foreign bases.

Guinness, Lord Moyne, at the end of 1938. The commission conducted public hearings in all the chief centers, gathered evidence on economic and health problems, and listened to some plain talk from advocates of governmental change. Its report was due to be published in 1940. The war has smothered it, along with many another record of disturbing facts concerning the creaking mechanism of the British Empire.

The part these colonies are destined to play in the Caribbean drama remains an enigma, to which only the war itself can furnish the answer. They will not have been touched in any vital particular if the struggle is confined to the Old World, and if England, France and Holland win. Their fight for self-determination can then be resumed at the point where it was halted when a belligerent status was thrust upon them in 1939. But if the United States is drawn into the war, or her safety is menaced by a German victory, a new set of issues will arise.

Because of the Panama Canal and because the islands are near enough to the North American continent to be used as airplane and submarine bases, the defense of the Caribbean is a matter of primary interest to the United States. It is less than secondary in the British and French scheme of things. The United States would be on their side, without

question, if she entered the present war, and she would be asked to take over the whole area in a military sense, thus releasing European ships and troops for service elsewhere. This would mean eventual American control probably at Nassau, Bahamas; Port Royal, Jamaica; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; the islands of Barbados (English) and Martinique (French) in the Lesser Antilles, and Curaçao (Dutch) off the Venezuelan coast. St. Lucia might also be occupied, on account of the excellence of its harbor at Castries, and Antigua as a link midway between Martinique and the U. S. Virgin Islands.

The United States already has naval stations at Guantánamo, Cuba; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and St. Thomas. The first has been strongly maintained ever since the close of the Spanish-American War. The decision to develop the last two to a high degree of efficiency was reached during the second term of Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the spring of 1939, the combined Atlantic and Pacific Fleets held maneuvers which clearly indicated a plan to defend the Caribbean Sea and all its approaches. It would be carried out in time of war, no matter what parallel action the English and French might be taking. The United States could not afford to trust any other nation to stop the loopholes that might give access to the Panama Canal.

In the circumstances, it would be eminently rational for England and France to yield the bases listed above. Possession of these would facilitate the American task, and contribute to the security of every Allied foothold in the region.

What, then, would happen at the peace settlement? Even if the democracies had been defeated, the United States could not possibly have been rendered helpless. The damage would have been done in the Old World, and the United States would continue to dominate the New. It is inconceivable that she would allow a square foot of Caribbean territory to be annexed by a European victor. With England and France out of the picture, she would doubtless retain some, if not all, of the points from which she had operated, and especially Port Royal, which is only 550 miles from the Isthmus of Panama and by far the most desirable outpost for the defense of the canal.

In the event of an Allied triumph, the United States might nevertheless want to keep Port Royal and perhaps two more of the temporary bases. The privilege of doing so might have been conceded in advance, because such deals are no novelty in the heat of a struggle when the lives of nations are at stake. They are difficult to consummate otherwise, for the country that gives up territory in normal times loses pres-

tige, and the inhabitants of the places involved are freer to voice their objections.

A powerful element in military and political circles in the United States would hail the acquisition of new bulwarks in the Caribbean. This is shown by the opinions bluntly phrased by Senators, retired officers of the Army and Navy, publicists and others, that England and France should be required to surrender certain New World holdings in payment of the debt owed since the war of 1914-1918. The demands became insistent immediately after the Munich crisis of 1938, and they were founded on military arguments, proving that another war was confidently expected. The proponents took it as a matter of course that the United States would wish to acquire *in toto* any colony where a good naval base was located. But the writer believes that the contrary is true.

If it were a matter of a port in a very small island—Castries, St. Lucia, for instance—the only reasonable thing would be to transfer the island. Port Royal, Jamaica, could be handled differently. Jamaica is as large as the State of Connecticut and has a population of 1,250,000, mostly of colored blood. It seems improbable that the United States would want another colony from which a vast amount of tropical products would have to be admitted duty free. Nor are her dominant political parties anxious to add considerably to the number of Negro citizens. She is none too happy about her experience in ruling Puerto Rico, and she may well wish that she had taken only a naval station there in 1898. She has pointedly evaded the question of according statehood to the island. In recent years, a nationalist party in Puerto Rico has demanded severance from the United States, and following a series of political assassinations its leader, Albizú Campos, was sentenced to a long term in prison.

It would be just as practicable to obtain Port Royal without annexing Jamaica as it was to get Guantánamo while leaving Cuba independent. No supervision of local affairs would be necessary. Jamaica could continue under the form of government then prevailing, or enjoy the degree of autonomy she was able to get from Britain, or pass under the Canadian flag, or become a republic.

Those who are familiar with Caribbean issues and who are accustomed to reading between the lines, would not be astonished if some such compromise were reached. As lately as the first week of March, 1940, President Roosevelt remarked that the existing fortifications in the Canal Zone should be supplemented by near-by bases. He implied

guardedly that while no acquisitions of territory were contemplated, it would be possible for the United States to arrange with friendly Powers for the military use of their airports in an emergency. The reference is stated unofficially to have been to Colombia and Costa Rica.

But in a war of gigantic scope, more than airports would be needed. As new naval stations, the minimum first requirements of Washington for the defense of the canal and the Caribbean presumably would be Port Royal, Jamaica, and Fort-de-France, Martinique—points which once held would be given up only with reluctance. Their value to the United States would be immense, even if she had remained neutral—and the German-Italian combination had won in Europe.\*

It is difficult to imagine the United States failing to pre-empt the key points of the Caribbean, in those circumstances. Mastery there would have become absolutely necessary to the security of Pan-American intercourse. ]

The ideas advanced in the latter half of this chapter are speculations, not prophecies. Still stranger developments may occur. One thing is sure: the Caribbean is the Mediterranean of the West and, if the present war reaches the New World, or totalitarianism dominates the Old, the sea's strategic importance will be greater than at any time in the 448 years since the coming of Columbus.

## THE END

\* Shortly after the above was written, French military power collapsed before the Teutons. Paris fell. The cabinet headed by Marshal Henri Philippe Petain signed an armistice which provided, among other things, for the internment of the French fleet. England's desperate answer was to sink or seize all French warcraft she could reach and to police the waters of French colonies, including Martinique. The kaleidoscope of war spins rapidly, and a work like this one, which goes to press several weeks in advance, cannot take cognizance of events which will be making history immediately prior to its publication. The writer believes, nevertheless, that the Old-World possessions in the Caribbean must play a Pan-American role henceforth. This fact will not be substantially altered by new drifts in Europe, no matter how sensational the latter may prove to be.

## A CARIBBEAN BOOKSHELF

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